



LEIGHTON PARK  
FOUNDED 1890

## IB Language Policy

***Language is the road map of a culture. It tells you where its people come from and where they are going. –Rita Mae Brown***

Many learners studying the IBDP at Leighton Park have rich and complex multilingual backgrounds and must access the majority of the IB Diploma Programme curriculum in a language other than their mother tongue. A thorough understanding of how this situation impacts on learning is essential if we are to ensure that the value of the learner diversity is not lost, that there is equal access to the curriculum for all learners and that the standards of conditions and practices in place foster a successful teaching and learning environment for everyone. This document provides a framework of language and learning that is applicable to all IB learners.

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As an IB World School, we are committed to the following Practices:

- The school places importance on language learning, including mother tongue, host country language and other languages (IB Standard A, Practice 7).
- Teaching and learning addresses the diversity of student language needs, including those for students learning a language(s) other than their mother tongue (IB Standard C3, Practice 7).
- Teaching and learning demonstrates that all teachers are responsible for language development of students (IB Standard C3, Practice 8).
- Assessment at the school aligns with the requirements of the programme(s). (IB Standard C4, Practice 1).
- Collaborative planning and reflection recognizes that all teachers are responsible for language development of students (IB Standard C1, Practice 8).
- The school utilises the resources and expertise of the community to enhance learning within the programmes (IB Standard B2, Practice 11).

## **The school language philosophy**

Students at Leighton Park have a wide range of ability in English language, from native speakers (the majority of students) to Intermediate level students (which includes a high number of students taking the IBDP). We understand that students will progress at different paces, and we view the ongoing language development as the shared responsibility of all stakeholders: parents, students, teachers, administration, and staff. Language development and acquisition is not just the responsibility of the EAL Department; we are all teachers of English language.

English is the language in which all lessons will be taught (with the exception of Language A) and in MFL lessons where the ideal is for most delivery to be in the target language). Admissions requirements and assessments are conducted in English to ensure students can access the curriculum that will be delivered in English. At the same time, we do make allowance for scores at admission that may have been lower due to English as an additional language issues.

Our philosophy supports the opportunity for all students to experience learning a second language as it provides significant experience in international education, enabling students to understand the thinking and culture of another people. Therefore all students in Y7 will learn Mandarin, French and Spanish, choosing to continue Mandarin or Spanish, together with French, into Y8 and 9. In addition, the school offers a programme in Global Communications to all students in Year 7 to aid their linguistic acquisition, analyse the structure of English and to deepen students' understanding of the relevance to them of intercultural communication. All students are encouraged to select at least one language option at GCSE.

Through effective communication in another language, students are sensitised to cultural diversity and better able to understand the global world in which they live, preparing them to be active participants in multilingual communities at home and around the world. In addition, language acquisition is delivered to ensure that students are provided with practical, transferable linguistic skills which can be used now and in the future to facilitate their learning and use of foreign languages.

For us, one of the strengths of the IBDP is the requirement for all students to learn a second language; either continuing an earlier study or ab initio. Those students for whom English is an additional language (Language B) they are enabled to complete a bilingual diploma. The school is also able to offer students the option of a school supported self-study option, following the guidance provided by the IB, to facilitate their study of their mother tongue at SL within the Language A option.

## **The school language profile**

- English-only background students with no Language B proficiency;
- English-only background students with minimal Language B exposure (GCSE);
- English background students with significant Language B exposure at home but who speak English as their first language;
- Bi-lingual French and Italian-speaking, students who have acquired both languages simultaneously since birth;
- Students with a mother tongue other than English; mainly Chinese, Russian, German, Serbian, Thai, Italian and Spanish.

## **Support for mother tongues**

- GCSE, A-level and IBDP SL school-supported, self-study courses in Mandarin, Italian, Russian, Arabic and German have been organised as required by students.
- Cultural activities take place throughout the academic year. For example, the celebration of Chinese moon day and Chinese New Year.
- International students' day is celebrated.
- International Prefects - students are appointed from amongst our Sixth Form community to support students from overseas, enabling them to maintain their mother tongue. The prefects also organise international events within Boarding Houses.
- Cultural and dining events in Oakview (dining facility) to celebrate national days;
- International Language Pie: this is an extra-curricular hobby organised by the MFL Department to pair up language learners with native speakers to develop the spoken language
- We have an EAL Department which provides one to one sessions and group sessions in learning English. The Department also supports the learning of key language essentials within their curriculum subjects (English for Science etc). EAL teachers deliver training to all teaching staff, visit lessons to offer advice and support learning and teaching for students with a mother tongue other than English.

## **Learning of the host country language and culture**

This is generally achieved through the full and weekly, international and English boarding programme and also through the mixed profile of ages and nationalities within the boarding houses. There is a programme of weekend activities which includes many that introduce our international students to the rich culture of this country; for example, visiting historic buildings, from castles to stately homes, famous markets, investigating the local towns and even designer shopping outlets. There are also language exchange programmes and opportunities for attendance at language schools.

## **Selection of languages in Group 1 and Group 2 which reflects the needs of students**

Group 1 languages vary with the needs of our students and have included English, Mandarin and German. In Group 2 we offer Mandarin, French, English and Spanish as well as support with various self-study courses, for example Russian, Arabic and Italian. The languages offered evolve over time as the needs of our students change.

## **Strategies to support all teachers in their contribution to the language development of students**

Leighton Park School is committed to promoting the idea that all teachers are teachers of language through professional development opportunities. This includes in-school advanced skills workshops and training workshops based on the literacy for learning, professional development programmes, resources and guidance. The Head of EAL (an IB English B teacher) and the languages team provide whole school INSET sessions and individual coaching to support teachers and academic departments. They also liaise with the School librarian to: collaborate on vocabulary and concepts across the curriculum; spread use of a common language about language; teach the conventions of referencing, citation and the principles of academic honesty; and to ensure the provision of relevant mother tongue literature, newspapers and study resources.

## **Aims**

The school aims to assist students with EAL to develop their English language skills in order that they can fully access all areas of the IB programme, engage with different cultural requirements, feel comfortable in lessons and be secure in the whole school environment.

## **Responsibility**

Where necessary, the EAL department will provide assistance with learning and developing language skills. Additionally each subject teacher will provide subject specific language and cultural support for the requirements of their subject. Through speaking, listening, marking, assessments and reports teachers will provide continuing and additional support to EAL students. Through the school welfare system (tutoring, involvement with Heads of House and other agencies) students will have access to other elements of linguistic usage and these engagements can provide a platform for students to express their concerns about language and progress if they have difficulties.

## **Procedures**

During the application process and on arrival at the school, all EAL students are tested to assess their written and spoken English language proficiency and understanding. If a student is found to have a weakness in a particular area of language then support sessions are provided by the EAL department. The department will provide support at any stage throughout the course and these sessions are tailored to the students' requirements e.g. pronunciation, essay writing. Academic subject teachers also provide support through monitoring students in lessons and through written, practical and oral assessments.

*Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB programmes – IBO 2008*

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