



INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL SUVA

Language Policy



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Guiding Statements

Mission

International School Suva is a beacon of education, diversity, and innovation committed to shared responsibility and growth.

Vision

Navigate. Nurture. Aspire.

Philosophy Statement

International School Suva (ISS) provides holistic international education for children ages 4-18, authorised by the International Baccalaureate (IB) and accredited by Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACS WASC). ISS is committed to the principle of equal opportunity in education and employment. The school is non-discriminatory and open to all students without regard to race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, nationality or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational, admissions or employment policies.

Policy Review

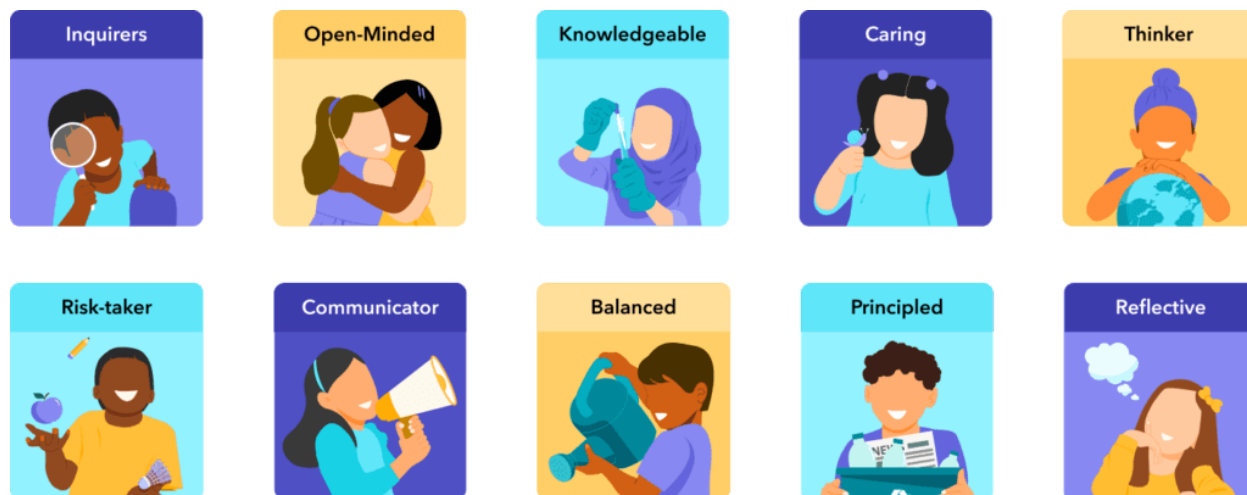
A formal policy review involving various stakeholders in a committee takes place every 4 years as part of the reaccreditation and curriculum review process.

Purpose

The purpose of this Language Policy is to guide the International School Suva (ISS) school community about the approaches to language learning and procedures, as highlighted by the International Baccalaureate (IB) and Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACS WASC).



Language Philosophy at ISS



“IB Learner Profiles” (2025). *Structural Learning*. Available through: <https://www.structural-learning.com/post/ib-learner-profile> [Accessed 1 Aug 2025].

The ISS Language Policy is a whole school approach through the Primary Years Programme (PYP), Middle Years Programme (MYP), Diploma Programme (DP), and High School Diploma (HSD). The ISS Language Policy is based on the Student Outcomes, which are underpinned by the IB Learner Profiles, specifically that students are communicators, meaning “We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.” (IB, Learner Profiles, 2017).

Language and communication create the cohesiveness and understanding across cultures we need in a changing world. The school community respects and honors 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.

ISS respects and supports home language development of students through the curriculum, extra curricular opportunities, parent resources, and encouraging access to home-country providers. ISS also offers host-country language learning opportunities from primary to secondary. Through an internationally-minded school culture, ISS believes that this diversity enriches the educational experience and contributes to the holistic development of students.



ISS also believes 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 language of communication and instruction at ISS, proficiency in English is key to being able to access information and communication. We recognize, however, that English is not the home language of many ISS families and that these families join ISS 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. ISS recognizes that:

- Our students are **knowledgeable**, and come to school with many different language backgrounds. They vary in their ability to learn languages, and are **courageous** in developing their understanding.
- 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 **open-mindedness** and true global citizenship in students.
- We need to prepare students for a world where new technologies and rapid growth in information are transforming **communication** in our society.
- English is the medium of instruction for all classes (with the exception of language acquisition classes), with this being viewed as an opportunity to foster the development of language and literacy as effective **communicators**.

Language Profile

ISS is a multicultural school community and includes students from over 60 different nationalities. With a wide range of student backgrounds, abilities and needs, particularly in the language areas, the school encourages home language development and celebrates the cultural similarities and differences of its families through the school



curricula and various extra curricular opportunities. Each student is empowered to realise their potential and as such, students are supported in areas of need or challenged in areas of aptitude.

Language is involved in all learning and is essential for inquiry and the construction of meaning. 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. While the medium of instruction is English, students are encouraged to use their home language when it supports their understanding of new concepts and helps them communicate their ideas effectively. 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, periodically receiving workshops on strategies for all language learners.

English instruction occurs throughout the school week and is integrated across all subjects. Students are encouraged to read widely to deepen their appreciation of English and other languages. The curriculum is designed to be flexible, supporting a range of learner needs and fostering students' growth as confident, critical communicators.

From Early Years to Year 12, the language programme values:

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

Additional language acquisition involves exposure to a range of vocabulary, texts, multimedia sources, and conversation. Students nearing proficiency in language analyse diverse texts, learning about form, content, purpose, and audience, while connecting with social, historical, and cultural contexts. More information about language learning is below.

Admissions Procedure

Admissions requirements and assessments are designed to ensure that every student can effectively engage with the curriculum in English. We employ a variety of methods to assess English-language proficiency, encompassing assessments of comprehension,



written and verbal language skills, review of prior academic records, and interviews. This policy is to be read in conjunction with the ISS Admissions Policy on the school website.

Primary School (EY1 to Y5)

- Applicants indicate on the enrollment form the language(s) spoken at home and languages learned at previous schools. The Learning Support Coordinator and Head of Primary are notified if a language assessment (WIDA) has been recommended by the Admissions team. Once at school, the Homeroom teacher and a learning support teacher will assess the student to determine if and how much additional support is needed.

Secondary School (Y6 to Y12)

- Applicants indicate on the enrollment form the language(s) spoken at home and languages learned at previous schools. Along with an interview with the Head of Secondary, applicants may be required to undertake Language Proficiency tests (such as WIDA) and/or MAP Growth (NWEA) assessments in order to determine appropriate placement. Additional support services such as English as an Additional Language (EAL) provisions may be required for an additional fee as established in the fee schedule on the school website.

Language Pathways in PYP

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

- Promote inquiry-based, authentic language learning.
- Provide authentic contexts for language learning and teaching in all areas of the curriculum through a trans-disciplinary nature.
- Explicitly activate prior knowledge using home and family languages, and other languages where appropriate
- Recognising the vital role families play in supporting, developing and sustaining children's language development
- Identify language learning opportunities and co-construct learning goals within and across units of inquiry, and learning engagements



- Provide language learning opportunities that support learners' inquiries and the sharing of their learning.
- 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 are aligned with the host country languages (Hindi & Fijian) through the additional language programme of Language and Culture. The aim of these classes is to expose students to cultural experiences, and allow the formation of connections to the local and wider communities. Primary is in the process of adopting a one-language program for Years 1-5 that feeds into the MYP and DP (Spanish, French, or Mandarin).

EAL Support in the PYP

Students identified for EAL support are assessed using WIDA Assessments, MAP Assessments, and internal ISS assessment data. Support is provided by the Learning Support team in the form of targeted pull-out sessions and in-class support depending on the Tier level of the student and the academic needs of the program. The Learning Support team collaboratively plans on a weekly basis with the year level team to ensure best EAL practices are used. Parents are informed that their child is receiving targeted EAL support. WIDA assessments are given twice annually (and more if required), as are MAP assessments. Homeroom teachers, Learning Support teachers, and the Head of Primary review data and progress to determine the level of support and need for the individual student. Exit criteria is stated and documented in the Learning Support/EAL Handbook.

Language Pathways in MYP

After the secondary school admissions procedure, ISS students are placed in language courses according to proficiency levels. Students with proficient levels of English are placed in MYP English Language and Literature, whilst students who are not yet proficient are placed in MYP English Language Acquisition. Students new to English are placed in additional support classes (English as an Additional Language - EAL).



MYP Language and Literature

At ISS, MYP English Language and Literature is open to students with at least intermediate levels of academic English. This course focuses on the development of literary analysis skills, intercultural awareness, and conceptual understanding. Students engage with a variety of literary and non-literary texts from world literature, as well as develop their own personal and cultural identities through creative projects.

On an annual basis, the school evaluates whether additional Language and Literature courses can also be offered. MYP students with home language fluency in another language are encouraged to continue learning this through home language clubs or externally through home-country providers.

MYP Language Acquisition

Students whose home language is not English are given a WIDA assessment upon admission to determine proficiency levels. Should students need more time and support to develop their English proficiency, students are placed in MYP English Language Acquisition. Additionally, students may be required to join English as an Additional Language (EAL) classes instead of another language.

ISS offers several options for students to acquire another language. The purpose of learning an additional language in the MYP is to gain proficiency and develop the ability to communicate effectively across cultures. The school recognizes that language learning fosters intercultural understanding and strengthens students' global citizenship.

Students who are proficient in English also select a Language Acquisition course from Chinese, French, Spanish, or Fijian Sign Language, depending on availability and enrollment numbers. Students are expected to continue with their chosen Language Acquisition course throughout the five years of the MYP to develop depth and fluency, recognizing that consistent language study over time leads to greater linguistic and academic success. Language learning progression and support are structured through the following practices:

- **Language Course Selection:** Students select a Language Acquisition course upon entry, based on availability and level appropriateness.
- **Language Course Continuity:** Students are expected to stay in their selected language to ensure consistent language development.



- **Language Change Process:** Changes are considered on a case-by-case basis, requiring approval from parents, teachers, the Language Acquisition Subject Area Leader (SAL), and the MYP Coordinator.
- **Accepted Reasons for Change:** Future study pathways (e.g., IB Diploma preparation, school transfers) or strong family connections to a different language.
- **Student Grouping:** Students are grouped according to phase levels using the MYP global proficiency table and ISS-developed standards using WIDA and CEFR assessments, ensuring no more than two consecutive phases per class.
- **Phase Transition:** Progression through Language Acquisition phases is assessed based on academic achievement, classroom performance, and teacher feedback.
- **Differentiated Instruction:** Instruction is adapted to meet the needs of students, particularly in classes with mixed phase levels.
- **Interdisciplinary Integration:** Language learning is integrated across subject groups through interdisciplinary planning.

A range of appropriate assessment methods such as portfolios, conferencing, miscue analysis, writing sample analysis, response journals are used to determine literacy levels and skills.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

We believe that supporting students whose home language is not English is essential to their academic and personal success. We are committed to fostering language development across a range of proficiency levels so that all students can access the curriculum meaningfully. ISS respects and supports the development of students' home languages, recognizing that linguistic diversity enriches the educational experience and contributes to students' holistic development. Through this commitment, the school aims to create an inclusive environment where language and cultural identity are valued and nurtured.

Students whose home language is not English are assessed and identified using WIDA assessment, observations, teacher consultations, and other data. English Learning Plans (ELPs) are then created according to the students' levels. In addition to students joining MYP English Language Acquisition, students join English as an Additional Language (EAL) instruction should the WIDA results show more intensive instruction. Support is provided by the EAL support team in the form of targeted pull-out sessions and in-class support depending on the level and needs of the student.



The EAL and Learning Support team also collaborates with teachers to plan lessons and experiences to ensure EAL students can access the curricula through a range of proficiency levels in English. Students undergo regular assessment to reflect on the level of support required, and are transferred out of structure support based on their individual progress and achievement. Parents are updated regularly with student progress meetings and learning plan reports.

Language Pathways in the DP & HSD

In Years 11 & 12, ISS students choose the IB Diploma Programme (IB DP) or High School Diploma (HSD) pathway. Students must choose two languages, at least one of which must be in English.

IBDP students with proficient level of English take DP English Language and Literature, while students whose home language is not English may opt to take the home language as a School Supported Self-Taught (SSST) language, along with DP English Language B, upon approval of the DP Coordinator.

Completion of two courses at the language and literature level with the award of a grade 3 or higher in both languages will enable the student to attain a bilingual diploma.

Most ISS students opt for DP English Language and Literature, along with a DP Language B (offered in French, Chinese, and Spanish). Through language acquisition, students gain language skills and intercultural awareness needed to communicate effectively in contexts where the target language is spoken.

Second language courses are offered at three levels:

- *Language ab initio*, for learners with little or no prior experience
- *Language B Standard Level*, for students who already have some knowledge of the language and wish to further enhance their ability to communicate in it
- *Language B Higher Level*, for students who are nearing proficiency in the language

Decisions regarding eligibility for a particular level are defined under guidelines outlined by the International Baccalaureate and are followed internally at ISS.



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