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THE ENGLISH SCHOOL  
LANGUAGE POLICY

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## **Policy Statement**

Language plays an important part in supporting the school's mission statement. The school's focus is on preparing world citizens who are responsible and self-confident and who are imbued with a sense of service to others. Within the school community many languages exist side by side and students are encouraged to compare languages and the cultures that are associated with them.

Providing quality education in English for children from a variety of cultural backgrounds implies from the school's viewpoint a commitment to providing support for students weak in English, the recognition of the important role teachers play in developing language acquisition and a belief in the importance of mother tongue development.

Language lessons not only provide a medium for the acquisition of language they also promote the development of the whole child. This comes about as it is not only language that is promoted but also the recognition and understanding of the culture that accompanies it. Throughout their language studies students tackle issues that are relevant to young people and important to their development and exploit when appropriate and where available links with other subject areas.

As the school makes welcome children with a very wide variety of linguistic backgrounds, it is vitally important that its language policy is as flexible as possible, thus allowing us to create an individually appropriate language course for each student. This is not only to allow the individual the opportunity to learn and provide recognition of mother tongue but also in-keeping with the school's individual development plan policy, recognition of internationalism and multicultural awareness.

## **Current Language courses**

*Language A* indicates that the language is taught in a way appropriate for students:

- for whom that language is their mother tongue
- as one of their mother tongues
- who have reached native or near native competency in the language.

English and Swedish are currently taught as Language A.

**Language B** indicates that the language is taught in a way appropriate for students:

- for whom that language is not their mother tongue
- who have not yet reached native or near native competency

Swedish, French, German and Spanish are offered as Language B standard or advanced.

**Language B Advanced** indicates that the language is taught for students:

- who have developed a higher level of competency in the language than those learning it at standard level. The students as yet do not have native competency. Language B standard clearly indicates that the course is intended for students who are learning the language as a foreign language at school such as French and Spanish and in some instances Swedish.

**English as a Second Language ESL** indicates that the students have a somewhat limited competence in English, and as such may need some extra support in English. These students are given extra support in English.

**English through Mother Tongue EMT** indicates especially in the pre-school environment that literacy skills and mathematics are taught in their mother tongue, rather than in English that is otherwise the language of instruction at the school. For such students they have not yet reached a competency in English where communication leading to skill development is possible. As a school we are currently only able to supplement this type of learning through the use of Spanish, French or German. Children from other linguistic backgrounds receive support from either other students who are able to use the same language such as Chinese or Hindi or parental assistance.

### **Mother tongue**

The development of mother tongue is central to the whole development of all cognitive skills in children. In general, students with good mother tongue skills develop good general language skills and thus good skills in English. As language is part of ones' identity the recognition of mother tongue and the culture associated with it increase a child's self-esteem and general sense of well-being. All pupils are offered mother-tongue training, according to Swedish law, if there are 5 or more pupils and if a teacher is available.

Parents are encouraged to support their child as much as possible at home in their mother tongue. Parents are also encouraged to seek lessons for their children in their mother tongue. The adjacent main library also provide books, CDs etc in different languages on request.

Students of the school are encouraged to concentrate on learning to read and write one language until they are competent. This level is often apparent in about grade two or three. Teachers throughout the school are encouraged to recognise students' mother tongues and home cultures in lessons and school life. In support of such a policy the local authorities stipulate that all children are entitled to home language learning during their time in Sweden when possible (please see above). Inquiries regarding the availability of this have to be presented directly to the school.

### ***Standard Forms of Language***

Students should be exposed to the language and culture of different countries. No one form is considered standard. It is necessary for older students to appreciate the different forms of language, for example, British or American English. The type of language a teacher is likely to use depends on where that teacher is from. The teacher will however point out differences in expression or spelling where appropriate.

### ***Handwriting***

Students also produce a variety of different forms of handwriting dependent on previous school experience. Throughout the school all forms of handwriting are acceptable, provided that it is neat and legible.

### ***English as the Language of Instruction***

English is the language of instruction within the school; as such the key to student success in other subject areas lies in their level of competency in this language. English lessons have an obvious role to play in teaching and reinforcing language skills needed in other mainstream subjects. However, subject teachers are also language teachers, and should be developing students' language skills. It is especially important to take into account those language skills required in their particular subject area(s). In addition to this, teachers are responsible for adapting their materials and teaching style to take into account the needs of students who are not native speakers of English. Subject teachers are encouraged to correct mistakes in English as well as content of written work, and to provide missing vocabulary where feasible.

Assessment criteria used within the school have been adapted so that student/parent friendly criteria are available for all subject areas.

All teachers are provided with in-service training to look at school policy documents and at IBO workshops to look specifically at certain programme requirements, principles and methods.

Teachers should encourage students to speak English in class (except in Swedish, French or Spanish classes, of course), but should be aware that students may benefit from help from another student in their mother tongue in which they are not only linguistically more competent, but can also think in more easily.

### ***English as a Second Language***

This type of instruction is usually done with the student remaining as part of their usual class. ESL student's benefit from the modelling of the English of their fellow students. As all the class sizes within the school are small teachers can arrange for the instruction of small groups within the classroom. A variety of materials can be found within the school to assist the teacher to cope with an ESL student within the classroom. This allows for the establishment of specific goals for that particular student. Students joining the school at secondary level are usually withdrawn from Swedish and/or French or Spanish classes and provided with additional English classes.

### ***Admissions Policy***

The school must accept the children of parents who are housed temporarily in Sweden. This means that there is no consideration placed upon the student's level of competency in English.

For parents employed by IKEA any additional language support is paid for by that company. Thus you could say that the school operates on a needs basis. Children of non-IKEA parents must be taken care of within the budget framework of the school.

### ***Staff***

To teach Language A or Language B standard and advanced teachers must be native or near native speakers of the language they teach.

### ***Professional Development***

Teachers are encouraged to be pro-active in their professional development. The school's strategic plan incorporates a vigorous policy of staff training and development.

### ***Languages Courses Offered by the School***

English, as the language of instruction is compulsory throughout the school. The course offered is suitable for students with a variety of English levels, from native speakers to those with a basic command of English. ESL support is offered to students with a limited knowledge of English.

Swedish, as the host language, is offered as part of the curriculum at all grade levels. It is considered and indeed mandated by law that all students attending compulsory school in Sweden have the opportunity to learn Swedish.

All students have the opportunity to learn a foreign language at the school. The school currently offers Swedish to all pupils and a choice between Spanish, French and German. (If the demand arises German is taught).

### ***Curriculum***

In the Primary Years Programme language is linked to all aspects of the curriculum and is steered by the class teacher. The Swedish language teacher works in close association with each class teacher to provide a framework of the basics of Swedish. Language work focuses around the Units of Inquiry.

The curriculum for English is guided by the IBO's Scope and Sequence documents/MYP Language A and Language B documents as well as the Swedish curriculum documents Lp94 and Lpför98. Thus the school carefully takes care of meeting the aims and objectives of both the state system and the international system within the school. There are course outlines for each language English, Spanish, French and Swedish, which include suggested content, resources, links with the Areas of Interaction and activities used for assessment. These course outlines are intended to ensure continuity and development of the language courses offered by the school. However, in the context of true internationalism the school experiences extreme variation in its foreign language students, especially in French and Spanish. This also varies from year to year and can be attributed to such circumstances as language background, general educational background often influenced by the mobility of the family, interest and ability level. The needs of such students are paramount, and the teacher is forced to adopt his/her course outline appropriately. The

curriculum should also be adapted as new links with other subject areas are developed, and to reflect current events where applicable.

### *Assessment*

Assessment in language like all other subject areas within the school is carried out in accordance with the school's assessment policy guidelines. These guidelines follow the general principles of the IBO Primary Years and Middle Years Programmes as well as the Swedish curriculum guidelines Lp94 and Lpför98. Students receive written grades from MYP 3 and upwards in association with state guidelines.