



Language Policy

CONTENTS

THE IBDP LEARNER PROFILE	2
INTERNATIONAL-MINDEDNESS	2
1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY	3
3. STRATEGY OF LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT	4
4. AVENUES OF LANGUAGE SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS	6
5. MOTHER TONGUE.....	7
6. PLACEMENT IN LANGUAGE COURSES.....	7
7. RELATED GUIDELINES AND DOCUMENTS	8
8. APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS OF THIS POLICY	8
REFERENCES.....	8

IB MISSION STATEMENT

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

CAIS MISSION STATEMENT

To cultivate learners with knowledge, skills, integrity and discernment, growing in love for God and service to humanity.

CAIS VISION STATEMENT

At Christian Alliance International School, we aspire to be the best school *for* Hong Kong, *for* the world, and *for* Christ.

THE IBDP LEARNER PROFILE

The IB Learner Profile is a set of ten qualities we desire in our students.

IB Diploma students strive to be...

Inquirers: We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

Knowledgeable: We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

Thinkers: We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

Communicators: We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening to the views of other individuals and groups.

Principled: We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

Open-minded: We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

Caring: We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive change in the lives of others and the world around us.

Risk-takers: We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

Balanced: We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives – intellectual, physical, and emotional – to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and the world in which we live.

Reflective: We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses to support our learning and personal development.

INTERNATIONAL-MINDEDNESS

In line with our school ethos and that of the IBO, we strive to foster an environment of caring individuals who promote a better world through intercultural understanding and respect. Our IB policies on Language, Assessment, Inclusion, Admission, and Academic Integrity are integral in helping us fulfill this aspect of our mission.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Christian Alliance International School (CAIS) is committed to providing a holistic education that aligns with the principles and values of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme. As an extension of CAIS's Language Policy, this IB Diploma Programme (IBDP) Language Policy aims to enhance the language learning experience further and promote linguistic and cultural diversity within our school community.

The IBDP Language Policy is designed to align with the IB philosophy and reflects CAIS's current language policy and practices. We strive to foster effective communication skills, intercultural understanding, and a lifelong appreciation for languages by embracing the IB's mission to develop internationally minded individuals.

Building upon the foundation laid by the CAIS Language Policy, the IBDP Language Policy embraces the core principles of language acquisition, including developing proficiency in multiple languages, cultivating language awareness, and promoting cultural competence. It also emphasizes the importance of integrating language learning across the curriculum, enabling students to effectively communicate, inquire, and reflect in various academic disciplines.

By adopting this comprehensive language policy, CAIS ensures a cohesive and inclusive approach to language education, empowering our students to become confident, empathetic, and globally minded communicators in an ever-evolving world.

This document outlines the specific guidelines, strategies, and support systems that will be implemented to fulfill the objectives of the IBDP Language Policy. It serves as a reference for all stakeholders, including students, staff, parents, and the wider CAIS community, in fostering linguistic growth and cultural appreciation.

2. STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

Our school's statement of philosophy on language is:

“CAIS affirms that all language is not simply a means of communication, but rather, our primary strategy for knowing, questioning, and understanding ourselves and others. Our shared human experiences create empathetic opportunities to better understand and communicate about our cognitive, social, and spiritual understanding of personal well-being and cultural identity.”

We believe that language is not only a means to communicate, but a tool to understand and appreciate different cultures through literature and contemporary contextual language tools. Language, in every form, is a means to express human experience, emotion, values, messages and is also an important vehicle to develop personal cognitive abilities, social skills, cultural identity, and global citizenship.

The nurturing of language skills is not only for the sake of improving language itself, but also facilitating the acquisition of knowledge of other areas of knowledge because concepts are

articulated from individual vocabularies meaningfully. With this respect, all subject teachers have the responsibilities to help students develop their language abilities.

At CAIS, we embrace language to deepen our understanding of ourselves, others, and the world. Through language, we foster empathy, cultural appreciation, and the development of well-rounded individuals equipped to engage in global conversations and contribute meaningfully to society.

3. STRATEGY OF LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

At Christian Alliance International School, we recognize the importance of language development in fostering cultural appreciation and global understanding. Our language program emphasizes the acquisition of two primary languages: English and Chinese.

English has been a fundamental part of our students' education since the beginning and serves as the primary language of instruction at school and in their homes. Additionally, Chinese (Mandarin) is one of the most widely spoken languages worldwide. To ensure comprehensive language learning, CAIS offers Chinese Studies classes to all students.

In recent years, we have expanded our language offerings to include French and Spanish from Grade 7 onwards. These additions provide students with valuable perspectives on Western, Francophone, and Hispanic cultures. Studying these languages encourages students to explore and appreciate the rich diversity of cultures, philosophical understandings, and unique developments in the East, West, Francophone, and Hispanic countries.

While Chinese Studies classes are mandatory for Preparatory to Grade 6 students, French, Spanish, and Mandarin are offered as elective options starting from Grade 7. This approach allows students to identify, comprehend, and discover similarities and contrasts among cultures underpinned by these languages.

French, a global language spoken in Francophone countries, offers insights into these nations' rich cultural heritage and global influence. Similarly, Spanish gives students a deeper understanding of Hispanic cultures and their contributions to the world.

Hong Kong and its neighbouring cultures are rooted and deeply influenced by English culture and Chinese culture. The acquisition of these two languages helps our students understand and respond appropriately to the changes and development of cultural, political, societal, economical, and technological aspects locally and globally. Adding French and Spanish to our language program further enriches our students' perspectives, fostering an appreciation for Western, Francophone, and Hispanic cultures. This expanded linguistic repertoire equips our students with a broader understanding of the world and enhances their ability to engage effectively in an interconnected global society.

With these foundational principles, the school has implemented the following practices to support language development:

A. Students are expected to:

- (i) Develop their English and Chinese reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills as primary languages.
- (ii) Cultivate their soft skills, such as communication, investigation, inquiry, problem-solving, concept development, interpretation, evaluation, criticism, and appreciation, in English and Chinese.
- (iii) Acquire subject knowledge in English (except for Chinese language courses) as the medium of instruction and communication, while Chinese Language courses are taught in Mandarin.
- (iv) Deepen their English abilities and foster a love for the language through English literature.
- (v) Understand various cultures and develop global awareness through contextual forms in English and Chinese.
- (vi) Choose French, Spanish or Chinese as elective options, expanding their linguistic repertoire and fostering an appreciation for Western, Francophone, Hispanic and local cultures.

B. English as the medium of instruction and communication:

- (i) Students are required to communicate and participate in academic and non-academic contexts using English within the school.
- (ii) Teachers (except for Chinese language teachers) are required to use English as the medium of instruction in their respective subject areas, facilitating the development of English skills and language strategies.

C. CAIS offers Chinese Studies, French, and Spanish classes to students to:

- (i) Increase their cultural-linguistic awareness, providing insights into the richly varied cultures of the Chinese-speaking, Francophone, and Hispanic worlds. This promotes cultural identity while preparing students to engage respectfully with different peoples and countries.
- (ii) Enhance their direct communication with Chinese, French, and Spanish-speaking individuals, increasing their effectiveness in the global marketplace and international community.
- (iii) Support their fulfillment of graduation and university entrance requirements.

D. Language learning resources and assessment tools in school:

- (i) English language and subject teachers facilitate learning resources and inquiry methods through the library and multimedia center.

- (ii) Chinese language teachers suggest learning and teaching resources in Chinese, aligning with the curriculum and utilizing the Chinese language for the library and multimedia center.
- (iii) English and Chinese teachers develop classroom teaching strategies that consider the diverse language abilities among students, including those studying French and Spanish.
- (iv) English, Chinese, French, and Spanish teachers create appropriate formative and summative assessment tools and criteria to monitor students' language learning progress, providing regular and timely feedback on all assessments.
- (v) The Learning Support Department provides language support, both in English and Chinese, to students who require additional assistance in their learning.
- (vi) English, Chinese, French, and Spanish teachers are provided professional development opportunities to enhance their teaching practices.
- (vii) These practices ensure that students at CAIS receive a comprehensive language education, encompassing English and Chinese as primary languages, while offering opportunities to study French and Spanish as elective choices. This approach prepares our students to become effective communicators, embrace cultural diversity, and thrive as global citizens in an interconnected world.

4. AVENUES OF LANGUAGE SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

CAIS is proud to employ a department of trained language specialists, in the Learning Support Department, and these teachers collaborate with classroom teachers to assist students with language proficiency. In alignment with the Inclusion Policy, there are four main strategies to help students on language support: (i) push-in, (ii) additional language support, and additional resources and (iii) teacher coaching.

i) **Push-in:**

The partnership between the English Language Learning (ELL) teacher and the classroom teacher is the mainstay of the language support system for IB students with additional language needs, as it creates positive alignment and collaboration for all three parties (inclusive of the student). Should the need arise, the ELL Department will schedule its teachers into key classes to allow the time and space for the ELL teacher to observe the language-rich content and develop scaffolding activities for the students who are working towards proficiency. In addition to enhancing communication and partnership in teaching practices, it facilitates more authentic links to the subject material and the resources built by the language support teacher outside of class.

Depending on the language needs of a specific student, the ELL Department will schedule additional contact time for supplementary language studies. In this way, the school operates from a premise of collaboration and "push-in", strategically enhancing the language learning process rather than overloading the student with excessive studies and isolating them.

ii) **Additional Language Support:**

The ELL teachers have dedicated learning support rooms for personalized instruction. The strategies and proficiency goals for these students are developed through collaboration with the student, their parents, their subject teacher(s), and the ELL professional.

The ELL department also provides support to students through a program called “ELLevate After School”. The structure and focus are as follows:

Tuesday or Thursday (3:45 - 4:30):

Academic language production (speaking and writing fluency)
(students should choose one of these days of the week to attend)

Wednesdays (3:45 - 4:30):

Academic vocabulary learning
(a peer guided class to internalize specific vocabulary used in lessons)

(iv) Teacher Coaching:

CAIS acknowledges that most students are not native English (L1) speakers. Therefore, a dedicated teacher coaching program has been developed to ensure that all teachers are equipped with skills to support varying levels of English proficiency within their classes.

5. MOTHER TONGUE

CAIS believes that mother tongue language development is crucial to maintaining cultural identity. In addition to English and Chinese, the school offers Spanish and French as third language options for students whose mother tongue is not English or Chinese and who wish to pursue further language studies.

The school currently offers Japanese as an extracurricular club. Through the use of Pamojaeducation.com, the school provides available mother tongue speakers in a variety of languages, such as Korean and Japanese, to assist students with their online language learning.

For all our students who are language learners, regardless of their level of proficiency, we have established the language learning laboratory, which is a part of the library. This is a part of the Learning Commons, a space for individual study, student collaboration, language support, and dedicated language support.

6. PLACEMENT IN LANGUAGE COURSES

It is important that students be placed *correctly* into DP language courses. The IB Organization states that the intentional misplacement of a student into a language course that does not provide an appropriate degree of challenge may be considered school maladministration. Therefore, when making language course decisions, the following guidance must be taken into consideration:

Language ab initio is a language acquisition course for students who have no prior experience with the target language or for those with very limited previous exposure. Language ab initio courses are only offered at Standard Level (SL) but must not be considered an “easy option.”

Language B (SL) is a language acquisition course for students who have some previous experience in the target language and can already communicate in the language in familiar contexts. While in the course, they will further develop this ability.

Language B (HL) is a language acquisition course for students who have previous experience in the target language and the ability to communicate in that language in various contexts and for various

purposes. As the study of two literary works in the target language is compulsory in Language B (HL), entering the course with these communication skills allows the student to begin the study of works of literature.

Chinese A: Language and Literature is a language and literature course for students who are already able to read, analyse and respond to complex literary and non-literary texts in Mandarin. If a student can already communicate on a range of topics in a variety of familiar and unfamiliar contexts, then Chinese A may be considered in place of a Group 2 language.

The IBDP Bilingual Diploma

A student with Mandarin fluency above Chinese B (HL) at CAIS may strive for the IBDP Bilingual Diploma. To achieve the Bilingual Diploma, Chinese A: Language and Literature must replace a language acquisition course. If a score of 3 or higher is achieved in two Group 1 courses (English A and Chinese A), the IB Organization will award the student an IBDP Bilingual Diploma.

7. RELATED GUIDELINES AND DOCUMENTS

Guidelines for developing a school language policy (2008), International Baccalaureate Organization.

8. APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS OF THIS POLICY

Approval and Amendment History	Details
Proposer	Daniel Schick (AP), Jun 2019
Original approval authority and date	Principal/HOS, Sep 2019
Updated	Rosy Gonzalez (Spanish), Dec 2023
Notes of Changes (last update)	-Addition of Learner Profile -Addition of International-Mindedness -Addition of Mission and Vision Statements -Major formatting
Approval authority and date	Daniel Schick (Principal), Jan 2024 Richard Vanderpyl (HOS), Jan 2024

REFERENCES

International Baccalaureate Organization. (2008). *Guidelines for developing a school language policy*. Retrieved from https://resources.ibo.org/data/g_0_iboxx_amo_0804_2_e.pdf