

Language Policy in the IB Diploma Programme

A- Introduction

Language is an essential tool for effective communication, continuous learning, and intercultural understanding, as recognized by the IB. At SSCC Ain Najm, the language policy recognizes the students' various linguistic backgrounds and aims to appreciate this diversity by supporting the development of the mother tongue and promoting the acquisition of additional languages. This policy also focuses on inclusion where all students, regardless of their linguistic background, have access to quality education. In line with the IB's mission to develop global citizens, the language policy encourages the respect for diversity and the development of international-mindedness.

At SSCC Ain Najm, one of the core means of developing international-mindedness is integrating an all-encompassing language policy, which in turn – culminates into effective teaching and communication. In this context, we adhere to two different curriculums, namely the Lebanese Baccalaureate and the French Baccalaureate, which are followed by the strategic aim of including the International Baccalaureate (IB). Even in kindergarten, our curriculum uses different languages and thus students learn Arabic and French from Kindergarten 1 (KG1) while English is introduced to them in grade 1. We, thus, encourage our students to discuss and share different cultures and perspectives, be open to acquiring new skills, and embrace diversity.

B- Language Philosophy

At SSCC Ain Najm, we believe that language is a fundamental tool for communication, learning, and cultural expression, shaping students' identities and opening doors to global opportunities. Some of the key components of our multi-linguistic culture are:

- Being a school with deep roots in multilingual Lebanon with Arabic as the mother tongue, while promoting the acquisition of additional languages such as French and English to foster global citizenship and international-mindedness.
- Promoting language as a Tool for Learning: Language is not only a subject of study but also a medium through which all learning occurs, supporting critical thinking and knowledge construction.
- Providing a dynamic learning environment that guarantees the students not only a sense of value but also of empowerment and belonging.
- Ensuring adequate access to quality language instruction for all students, regardless of linguistic background and educational needs.
- Providing resources to meet the language needs of all students, including those with special educational needs and diverse linguistic backgrounds.

- Integrating language across the curriculum in order to ensure that language development remains the heart of all learning areas.
- Acknowledging that language is the link between different cultures and backgrounds which helps promote respect and understanding between individuals.
- Encouraging the whole school community to take part in developing a community that's linguistically rich and supportive.

The IB aims to empower students to become effective communicators who value linguistic diversity and contribute positively to a multicultural world.

C- School Language Profile

At SSCC Ain Najm, our diverse community mirrors the rich linguistic culture of Lebanon and provides an exciting environment for language teaching and learning within the academic context. Our students are proficient in three languages: Arabic, French, and English. The main language of instruction used at our school is French, with Arabic and English employed for their respective subjects. In the IBDP, the main language of instruction is English, with Arabic as the mother tongue being emphasized through Subject Group 2: Arabic BL (HL) for students holding the Lebanese passport. Appropriate measures will be considered when foreign students enroll in the IBDP in order to develop their mother tongue as well. The majority of the students (90%) have Arabic as their mother tongue. We acknowledge that our students may include learners with different proficiencies and language backgrounds and aim to offer equal opportunities for language development.

a) Languages of Communication and Legal Requirements:

- integrating Arabic language and literature within our syllabus as part of the Lebanese Baccalaureate
- utilizing French as the language of instruction as required by the French Baccalaureate
- placing strong emphasis on the English language and aiming to incorporate the International Baccalaureate's Diploma Programme

b) Beliefs About Language Teaching and Learning

- upholding the belief that language is an approach to thinking, comprehending, and making meaning from the world and an identity maker
- Language is integral to cognitive growth, self-expression, and the development of critical thinking skills.
- making language learning a dynamic, interactive process in real-life situations and interaction through cultural exposure

- Becoming proficient in multiple language is essential to the development of cultural appreciation and the ability to empathize with others.
- **Recognizing that language acquisition is a continuous process that is developed through regular exposure, practice, and emersion in real-life situations.**
- **Adopting inquiry-based learning as an approach to Language Development:** An approach that stimulates curiosity, critical thinking, and exploration.

These beliefs guide IB schools in creating dynamic, inclusive, and culturally responsive language programs that prepare students to thrive in a multilingual and interconnected world.

c) Related Policies

The application of language philosophy and beliefs in the International Baccalaureate (IB) is directly related to the following key policies:

1. Inclusion Policy:

- Helps students from different linguistic backgrounds as well as those with special needs in education.
- Fosters personalized accommodations, depending on each student's case, to guarantee fair opportunities for all.

2. Assessment Policy:

- Aligns with IB beliefs for language evaluation in a manner that is fair to all cultures and puts students' progress as a priority.
- Encourages formative and summative evaluations designed to cater for the different language abilities.
- Makes assessments as accommodating as possible while simultaneously ensuring equity for all the learners

3. Academic Integrity Policy:

- Highlights the ethical application of language, mainly in research, creative writing, and communication.
- Encourages the development of new ideas and appreciation for intellectual property.

4. Admissions Policy:

- Outlines language requirements for entering the IB program as well as guarantees support for students from different linguistic backgrounds.
- assessing whether or not those applying have the language skills required to continue with their courses to provide further language support

Through these principles, the IB preserves and propagates multilingualism, inclusion, as well as intercultural understanding in language education.

D- Language Practices

SSCC recognizes the important role of language in the IBDP that goes beyond language subjects into the personal growth of our students that allows them to interact with and understand others from different cultural and language backgrounds. Our language practices are designed to cater for the linguistic diversity of our students and to value multilingualism as a positive attribute in the globalization perspective.

1. IBDP Language Course Offerings

Our school has chosen the below language subjects for the 2026-2027 Academic Year. More course offerings are intended to be offered in the years that follow.

Group	Subject Group	Subject
1	Language A	English A: Language and Literature (SL/HL)
2	Language B	Arabic B (HL)

2. Enrollment Requirements for Language Courses in Groups 1 and 2 (IBDP)

To ensure appropriate placement and academic success, the following enrollment requirements for Group 1 and 2 language courses need to be met:

- **Group 1 – Language A: Studies in Language and Literature (English A: Language and Literature (SL/HL) are offered):**
 - Students enrolling in this course (SL/HL) must demonstrate proficiency in English speaking and communication skills (during the interview).
 - Enrolment is also based on a 15/20 or above total average in grades 9 and 10, along with teacher recommendations.
 - HL is recommended for students with strong analytical and critical reading/writing skills who wish to pursue language, literature, or humanities in

higher education. These skills will be revealed in the placement test that the students will sit for at the end of grade 9.

- **Group 2 – Language B: Language Acquisition (Arabic B HL is offered):**
 - Students enrolling in this course must demonstrate proficiency in English speaking and communication skills (during the interview).
 - Enrolment is also based on a 14/20 or above total average in grades 9 and 10, along with teacher recommendations.
 - All students holding the Lebanese nationality will need to enroll in HL as per the recommendation of the Ministry of Education.

The school holds pre-IBDP counseling sessions to guide students and parents in selecting between SL and HL options, based on academic goals, language background, and future university requirements.

3. Requirements of the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education for Language Courses

In addition to IB expectations, SSCC Ain Najm adheres to the language curriculum and equivalency requirements mandated by the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education, which include:

- Arabic B: Language Acquisition at HL is compulsory for all Lebanese wishing to enroll in the IB Diploma Programme.
- For Lebanese students wishing to obtain equivalence for their IB Diploma, passing Arabic requirements is essential.

These requirements are communicated clearly to students and parents during the admissions process and course selection phase to ensure proper compliance.

4. Language and International Mindedness at school

International-mindedness is a commitment to knowing and addressing global issues as a result of which a sense of respect and empathy for different cultures and views is developed and strengthened. This understanding is steeped in numerous ways at the school:

- a) **Developing critical thinking:** to allow students to learn how to critique and engage with the complex global issues and develop their own opinion in a meaningful manner.

- b) **Ensuring human empowerment:** to enable all humanity in all its aspects "promouvoir tout homme et tout l'homme" and give our students the chance to be more understanding, tolerant, and respectful persons.
- c) **Indorsing open dialogue:** to create a secure environment where students of different opinion are given due recognition and consideration.
- d) **Encouraging extracurricular engagement:** to participate in community activities like community service and develop leadership skills as well as promote well-being. Such activities are Model United Nations (MUN) and the Sports Club.
- e) **International Days Celebrations:** to promote cultural diversity such as World Down Syndrome Day and International Women's Day.
- f) **Global Village - Week of Francophonie:** to demonstrate the enormous cultural richness and diversity of French-speaking countries by representing each country's culinary delights, artistic expressions, and unique cultural ways.
- g) **Operation 24 Hours of Famine:** to enable students to live by up the principles of both compassion and sharing. On March 27, the school of 147 high school students had the chance to participate in fasting, prayer, and community service as a means to contribute towards poverty-stricken families.

5. Support Strategies for Home Languages

SSCC Ain Najm is committed to maintaining and nurturing students' home languages while supporting those who are not yet proficient in the language of instruction. These support strategies include:

- **Home Language Support:**
 - Encouraging families to continue developing the home language at home.
 - Providing library and digital resources in multiple languages, including Arabic, French, and English.
 - Organizing cultural and linguistic celebrations (e.g., Francophonie Week, Arabic Language Day) to validate and showcase all languages spoken in the community.
 - Including the home language in creative assignments or presentations when possible.

- **Support for Students Not Proficient in the Language of Instruction:**

- Offering additional language support sessions in English and French for students with lower proficiency.
- Utilizing visual aids, simplified texts, and bilingual materials to help students access content.
- Collaborating with the RAISED team to implement differentiated strategies and language scaffolding.
- Creating buddy systems pairing proficient and emerging language users to foster peer learning.
- Gradual integration into academic subjects with tailored teacher support.

These strategies ensure equity in learning and maintain a sense of belonging and identity for all students, in alignment with IB's inclusivity goals.

E- Goals for Language Teaching and Learning

The guiding principles that ensure effective language learning and develop students who are open minded and critical thinkers are the following:

- a) Share a common understanding of international mindedness:** fostering a sense of global citizenship, encouraging students to engage thoughtfully with the world around them.
- b) Recognize multilingualism:** including multiple languages in classroom instruction and celebrating linguistic diversity through school events, publications, and competitions. The school also encourages multimodal expression by integration visual arts, music, and drama in language teaching.
- c) Align with IB Principles and Learner Profile:** supporting students in becoming efficient communicators and globally minded learners.
- d) Promote inclusion and equity:** providing students learning in a language other than their mother tongue with targeted support.

F- Roles and responsibilities

The entire school community joins in collaborative effort to improve the students' development of language and communication skills. The roles and responsibilities are as follows:

1. School administration:

- Outline and detail a clear language policy in line with the school's philosophy.

- Ensure the introduction and regular revision of the language policy for continuous alignment with the school's mission and IB philosophy.
- Offer the necessary resources that help promote efficient language learning and teaching.
- Offer materials, professional development, and staff to support multilingualism and effective language instruction.
- Conduct informative sessions for parents and students to communicate the school's language subject choices and their requirements.
- Provide continuous professional development opportunities for teachers and staff.
- Evaluate and improve the implementation of the language policy regularly.
- Create a school environment that celebrates and values language diversity.

2. Teachers:

- Act as language teachers regardless of their specialized field and weave language development and cultural understanding into their teaching.
- Work with colleagues, specialists, and parents to implement the language policy effectively.
- Take an active part in the professional development seminars that are offered to them.
- Observe students' language acquisition and encourage its proper use.
- Evaluate and support students' language progress in alignment with the language policy.

3. Students:

- Get involved in language studies at school and in their personal environment.
- Appreciate and learn from the diverse linguistic environment they are in.
- Assume responsibility for their own language development by employing available resources to improve their communication with others.
- Practice and apply learned languages in academic and social contexts.
- Maintain and develop proficiency in their mother tongue.

4. Parents:

- Attend the informative sessions conducted by the school to help their children with language development.
- Sustain open communication with teachers to ensure proper and continuous development of their children's language skills.
- Encourage students to use language resources such as digital tools and materials provided by the school.

G- Review and adaptation

The language policy will be reviewed every two years and upon need, considering feedback from students, parents, and staff to ensure its effectiveness and relevance. The policy will be updated to reflect changes in our community's linguistic landscape and educational goals.