

ISAWHIS Secondary School Language Policy

Purpose and scope

This policy explains how ISAWHIS develops language across Secondary, places students in language courses and supports access to learning in the MYP and Diploma Programme. It applies to subject teachers, language teachers, school leaders and student support staff. Admissions decisions also follow the school admissions policy; assessment arrangements follow the relevant programme and school assessment policies.

Language philosophy

Language enables inquiry, relationships and identity. All teachers teach the language of their subjects as well as their subject content. Students learn language, learn through language and learn about language. English is the principal language of instruction in Secondary. Chinese, other additional languages and students' home languages enrich learning and connect students to their communities and cultures.

ISAWHIS values multilingualism. A student's strongest language can support conceptual understanding, discussion and research. Teachers explain when another language may be used to build understanding and when the final response or assessed task must be in a specified language. Language proficiency is considered alongside, rather than assumed to represent, subject knowledge or learning needs.

Language pathways

Students follow an appropriate combination of Language and Literature and Language Acquisition according to their language profile, prior learning, aspirations and available courses. The school reviews placement as proficiency develops. Current course choices and timetabled periods are communicated annually; a language course is offered where staffing, student demand and programme requirements make it viable. New offerings require approval by the Head of School after consultation with programme and language leaders.

MYP Grades 6-9; ISA-school Based Curriculum Grades 9-10.

Students study language through MYP Language and Literature and, where appropriate, Language Acquisition. English and Chinese pathways are determined through placement evidence, not nationality or home-language label alone. The school supports a student to move towards Language and Literature when sustained reading, writing, speaking and listening evidence shows that the course is suitable. Grade 9 and 10 pathway decisions consider preparation for post-16 study and are discussed with the student and family.

Diploma Programme Grades 11-12

Language choices are agreed with the DP Coordinator and relevant language teachers in light of the student's proficiency, previous study, intended pathway and available provision. Entry or transfer into Grade 12 requires an individual review of programme compatibility, completed work and the school's ability to support the student. Where a full diploma is not appropriate, the school discusses available course options and graduation requirements with the family rather than assuming an automatic alternative.

Admissions and initial placement

Each Secondary application is reviewed individually using previous reports, a language profile, admissions assessment, student work and a discussion with the student and family. Leaders consider whether the student can access the proposed curriculum with the support available. No single percentage score, MYP phase, CEFR level or external test result alone determines admission or course placement. The admissions policy states the current admission process and decision authority.

The relevant programme coordinator and language teachers recommend initial placement. They record the evidence, the support proposed and a review date, then explain the decision to the family. Where evidence is mixed, a time-limited placement with agreed review criteria may be used.

English language development and support

The school identifies English language needs through admissions evidence, classroom work, teacher observation and assessment over time. Language teachers, subject teachers and student support staff agree suitable support according to need and current staffing. Support may include explicit language instruction, adapted resources, pre-teaching vocabulary, structured talk, reading support and writing models. Support plans identify a responsible member of staff, review date and communication with the family.

English as an Additional Language (EAL) describes support for students developing English for learning; it is not a diagnosis of additional learning needs. Where progress raises a separate concern, staff consult the student support team and follow the school's inclusion procedures. English language development and learning needs are assessed on their own evidence.

Language in every subject

Departments identify the language demands of their units, including key concepts, technical vocabulary, text types, discussion and writing. Subject teachers model these features, provide suitable scaffolds, create opportunities for purposeful speaking and writing, and gradually reduce support as students become more independent. Teachers give feedback on the language needed to communicate subject understanding while applying the published criteria for assessment.

Language development is addressed in collaborative planning, professional learning and review of student work. Department leaders and programme coordinators check that agreed approaches are visible in planning and classroom practice.

Home languages and Chinese

Students are encouraged to maintain and develop their home languages through reading, family and community connections, library resources and appropriate classroom use. The school considers requests for additional provision subject to qualified staffing, viable demand, safeguarding arrangements and programme requirements. External classes, where arranged, are identified separately from the school's assessed curriculum.

Chinese language courses support both students developing Chinese as an additional language and students studying Chinese Language and Literature. Placement reflects demonstrated proficiency across language skills. Learning about Chinese culture and engagement with the host community complement formal language study.



Reviewing placement and progress

Language teachers review placement at least once each semester and when substantial new evidence arises. Reviews use a range of evidence: assessed work across skills, a portfolio, teacher observation, student voice and, where useful, an appropriate external assessment. An MYP criterion level or external test result does not automatically trigger a phase change. Teachers document a recommendation; the programme coordinator confirms timetable and curriculum implications; the student and family are informed of the outcome and next review date.

Library and communication

The library develops English and Chinese collections and, where practicable, resources in other languages represented in the community. Staff help students select accessible and suitably challenging material. Key family communications are made understandable to parents and carers through translation or interpretation where needed and feasible.

Responsibilities and policy review

- Subject teachers plan and teach the language of their disciplines and share evidence of students' progress.
- Language teachers assess proficiency, recommend placement and coordinate language development strategies.
- Programme coordinators oversee course suitability, transitions and consistency with programme requirements.
- Student support staff advise on barriers to learning and coordinate support where needed.
- Secondary leadership reviews provision, staffing and implementation with the language team each year.

This policy is reviewed annually and when language provision or programme requirements change. Current timetables, course offerings and admissions thresholds are published through the relevant operational documents rather than fixed in this policy.