



Language Policy

Date of issue	May 2026	
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Version	Final	
Policy Type	Academic	
Circulation	All staff	
Date Authorised	May 2026	
Checked by	Principal	
Review Date	September 2027	

Rationale

Emirates International School Meadows (EISM) is an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School offering the Primary Years Programme (PYP), Middle Years Programme (MYP), Diploma Programme (DP) and Career-related Programme (CP). EISM provides a challenging, motivating multilingual environment in which English is the language of instruction. We view language as a tool for making meaning and recognise that each student's cultural experiences, skills and interests should inform teaching and learning.

As an IB World School, EISM recognises language as a critical enabler of career readiness, ethical engagement and global employability. Language learning across all IB programmes enables students to communicate effectively in professional, intercultural and real-world contexts, connecting academic learning with career pathways and community engagement.

Philosophy of language teaching and learning

Language wraps itself around, in, through and between everything that we teachers and learners do in the classroom.

(Ritchhart 2002: 141)

At EISM, we aspire for all students to become multilingual and communicate positively within and beyond their communities. Multilingualism and critical literacy support access to the curriculum, progress and international-mindedness through cultural identity, intercultural awareness and global citizenship.

At EISM, all teachers are language teachers because language transcends curriculum areas. Through the IB programmes, we aim to develop confident, curious and proficient readers, writers, viewers, presenters, speakers and listeners. Language is taught meaningfully and in context, including academic, vocational and professional settings, using real-life scenarios, native speakers, the local community, career-related learning and varied text types. Inquiry enables students to make connections, explore and investigate. Language learning is developmental and builds on each student's existing knowledge and skills.

Language development extends beyond academic proficiency to include workplace communication, professional discourse, reflective writing and ethical dialogue. Students are supported to use language purposefully across academic, vocational and experiential learning contexts, enabling them to articulate ideas clearly, collaborate effectively and reflect meaningfully on their learning and professional growth.

Access, Equity and Inclusion

As an international school in Dubai, EISM is committed to providing access to Arabic language learning and using the host country and community to enrich language and cultural experiences across the curriculum. We also value each student's opportunity to maintain and develop their mother tongue(s). Learning additional languages enables students to explore and reflect on different cultural perspectives.

At EISM we are committed to providing an inclusive and equitable learning environment. We aim to ensure access to all four IB programmes offered by the school.

IB Practices Related to Language

As an IB World School, we are committed to the following practices:

- The school places importance on language learning, including mother tongue, host country language and other languages.
- Teaching and learning addresses the diversity of student language needs, including those for students learning a language(s) other than their mother tongue.
- Teaching and learning demonstrates that all teachers are responsible for language development of students.
- Teaching and learning in the CP explicitly supports language development for career-related contexts, including professional communication, reflective writing, ethical reasoning and community engagement.
- Assessment at the school aligns with the requirements of the programme(s).
- Collaborative planning and reflection recognise that all teachers are responsible for language development of students.

The school utilises the resources and expertise of the community to enhance learning within the programmes.

Language Pathway Practices

These pathways provide an overview of the practices through which EISM brings its language philosophy to life and promotes excellence in language learning.

EISM places importance on mother tongue, host country and additional language learning. In line with KHDA and Ministry requirements, students holding Arab passports study Arabic Language and Literature. Students' backgrounds are considered when advising Language B pathways.

At EISM, language is taught holistically. Each programme has age-appropriate learning outcomes across speaking and listening, reading and writing, and viewing and presenting. We promote authentic, inquiry-based learning through the exploration of different genres and employ qualified language teachers for English, the host country language and additional languages.

Students are encouraged to use their mother tongue to access the curriculum. They may translate classwork and share their learning with parents and the wider community in their mother tongue. Homeroom displays also reflect the languages represented within the school community, normalising multilingualism and encouraging curiosity.

Language In Practice

PYP (EY-Y6)

All Primary School students study English and Arabic from EY to Year 6. French begins in Year 4 unless there are extenuating circumstances, such as a diagnosed and documented learning need. Students are encouraged to celebrate their mother tongue as part of their identity through events including Arabic Week and World Book Day.

The English as an Additional Language (EAL) Department supports students who are new to English and need additional help to access the curriculum. As English is an additional language for many students, a standalone phonics and grammar programme provides further support.

In line with the PYP framework, all Primary teachers are language teachers and play a key role in developing students' English through the subjects they teach.

IB MYP (Y7-11)

Students in Years 7-10 study English, Arabic and French or Spanish unless there are extenuating circumstances, such as a diagnosed and documented learning need. In Year 11, students holding Arab passports continue Arabic Language and Literature in line with Ministry requirements; other students may choose Spanish, Arabic or French.

Students who join the school in MYP4 from another language of instruction are encouraged to continue studying their native language as a bilingual student, taking their native language as an MYP Language and Literature A option in their Language Acquisition schedule.

MYP Certification

To gain MYP certification, students must meet the IB language-study requirements through an approved combination of Language and Literature and/or Language Acquisition courses.

English:

- All students follow their timetabled English language instruction each week (number of lessons and timings may vary depending on the year group).
- Language Acquisition English supports students who need additional development of English language skills. Students follow the MYP course of study with appropriate language modification and are expected, where appropriate, to transition to Language and Literature after a period of targeted support. This is a support programme rather than a long-term alternative pathway and may replace MFL during the support period.
- English competency is an entry requirement at EISM. Students entering with limited English may receive Language Acquisition support alongside their Language and Literature course.

Arabic Language and Literature:

- All students with Arabic passports are required to study Arabic Language and Literature as per the Ministry of Education guidelines up until the end of Year 13.
- The Arabic Language and Literature programme is for all students who are registered at the school with an Arabic passport. The Arabic Language and Literature classes are grouped by ability. Students

are taught Modern Standard Arabic according to the Ministry of Education curriculum and requirements.

- Students receive the compulsory learning time specified by the Ministry of Education, which varies by year group.
- Students wishing to complete their Personal Project in Arabic may do so.
- At the end of the MYP course, students will complete an IB MYP On-Screen Assessment for Arabic Language and Literature.

Language Acquisition (Arabic, French and Spanish):

- All students are required to study Arabic Language Acquisition as per the Ministry of Education guidelines, up until the end of Year 10.
- All students are required to study French/Spanish Language Acquisition in Years 7-11.
- Arabic Language Acquisition students follow a course in Arabic as a foreign language, which aims to enable them to communicate effectively. The programme meets the needs of both students who have had little or no previous experience of learning the Arabic language as well as those who have studied the subject in Primary School.
- Students in Year 7-10 are placed in groups according to numbers of year studying Arabic.
- IB MYP Assessment Criteria for Language Acquisition are used.

Diploma Programme (DP) and Career-related Programme (CP)

All students in Years 12–13 follow either the IB Diploma Programme (DP) or the IB Career-related Programme (CP).

Career-related Programme (CP) – Year 12 - 13

In the IB Career-related Programme, language learning plays a central role in supporting students' success across academic, professional and reflective contexts. CP students study a minimum of three DP courses at EISM, including a language course, alongside BTEC CRS qualifications.

Language development in the CP is explicitly embedded within:

- Personal and Professional Skills (PPS): structured discussion, collaboration, ethical debate and professional communication
- Reflective Project: sustained academic writing, critical reading, ethical analysis and formal referencing
- Language & Cultural Studies: strengthening proficiency in a language relevant to students' future pathways and career aspirations
- Community Engagement: authentic language use in real-world, intercultural and professional contexts

CP teachers collaborate closely to ensure consistent language expectations, shared academic and vocational vocabulary, and aligned assessment practices across DP subjects, career-related studies and CP Core components. This reinforces the principle that all teachers are teachers of language, supporting students to transfer language skills effectively across academic, vocational and experiential learning contexts.

Diploma Programme (DP) – Years 12–13

Students enrolled in the DP are required to study two languages, selected from Studies in Language and Literature and/or Language Acquisition. IBDP language courses are taught 6 periods per week at Higher Level (HL) and 5 periods per week at Standard Level (SL).

DP language options include:

- Group 1: Studies in English Language and Literature or Literature (HL or SL)
- Group 2: French B, Spanish B, Arabic A or B, French ab initio, Arabic ab initio, Spanish ab initio

Ab initio courses at the DP level are designed for students with *little or no prior experience* of the target language.

Students wishing to pursue a bilingual diploma may opt for a Self-Taught Language in their mother tongue. In this pathway, the student does not study a Group 2 language but instead receives private tuition, usually after school. A Self-Taught Language Supervisor is appointed to oversee the student's progress and ensure alignment with IB requirements.

Host Country Language

The provisions for the promotion of the host country's language are embedded into the Ministry of Education's Arabic Language learning requirements. As per Ministry of Education (MoE) directives, all students who are

enrolled at the school with an Arabic passport are required by law to study Arabic Language and Literature until the end of Year 13. Arabic Language Acquisition is not an option.

Fluency in the language is developed in the key areas of Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening over the multi-year, progressive course of study. Arabic Language and Literature /Ministry of Education courses will be streamed by ability. All students registered at the school with an Arabic passport are required to follow the MoE Arabic course of study. Exemptions from Ministry of Education Arabic can only be gained by parental requests to the KHDA.

- The MoE sets the Arabic programme of study required for all grades. This includes the topics covered, syllabus details and textbooks to use. All students required to study Arabic Language and Literature are expected to meet MoE standards.
- Results of End-of-Year “Ministry” exams are sent to the MoE. They are expressed as a % rather than on a 7-1 scale.
- Ministry exams are no longer prepared by the MoE. Schools have been instructed to prepare the exams according to the MoE guidelines. Exams are kept in the event of a Ministry inspection.
- For Years 12-13, they also do examinations for the IBDP syllabus.
 - Year 13 does the Ministry exam after the IBDP exams are finished.
 - Year 12 does the Ministry exam in class time before the start of the end-of-year examination period.
- Responsibility for preparation of both exams is overseen by the Head of Arabic.

The host country’s language is also promoted during school assemblies, different school events, signage throughout the school and as part of our UAE National Day celebrations.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

EISM has always welcomed students with little or no English language skills. Upon joining the school, these learners are assessed by the EAL Department, and receive the appropriate extra English language support to access the curriculum. They are placed in small groups which promotes a secure and happy atmosphere to encourage learning. Our EAL Department follows what is known as “the sheltered immersion system”, whereby the EAL students are placed into an age appropriate class upon entering the school but receive intensive EAL instruction.

The EAL Department follows an EAL curriculum which teaches the language skills of listening and speaking, reading, writing, viewing and presenting. Emphasis is first placed on listening and speaking skills to allow the students to communicate with their peers and teacher. Once the students have developed these elementary skills, they then develop their reading, writing as well as viewing and presenting skills.

The department uses a variety of language programmes which have been researched and written specifically for EAL learners and incorporates the latest research-based methods of teaching EAL. These language programmes are linked with the content taught in PYP, MYP, CP & DP. Advanced learners in addition will receive support and reinforcement to reflect the content of the mainstream classroom.

EAL learners may continue to receive EAL support for up to three years. Before exiting the programme, the student's file is reviewed by the class teacher along with the EAL teacher where they agree that the student no longer requires the EAL programme. In the High School, the EAL Coordinator requests termly reviews of student progress from all class teachers against specific EAL criteria to gain a holistic analysis of the students' main curriculum language development. This information is used to determine if the child is exited from the EAL support programme.

EAL learners may receive support for up to three years. Before a student exits the programme, the class teacher and EAL teacher review the student's profile and agree that additional EAL support is no longer required. In High School, the EAL Coordinator requests termly feedback from subject teachers against agreed EAL criteria to provide a holistic view of curriculum language development and inform exit decisions.

Teaching and learning addresses the diversity of student language needs, including those for students learning a language(s) other than their mother tongue.

Differentiation (personalisation) in language lessons reflects IB standards and practices. Teachers respond to students' needs through strategies such as small-group teaching, resources with varied language

complexity, adapted questioning and tasks, and appropriate student choice. In the MYP, placement follows relevant IB guidance, and specialist individual or group support is provided where required.

Teaching and learning demonstrates that all teachers are responsible for language development of students

EISM focuses on the transdisciplinary nature of language learning by recognising and modelling the role of language in each subject as well as in the language of instruction, host country language and in other languages, and by developing an understanding of the IB objectives and pedagogical language of the programmes.

Oral, written and visual communication skills are explicitly planned through the school's scope and sequence. Language acquisition is informed by four concepts: context, culture, reflection and fluency. Students are encouraged to recognise patterns, develop theories and construct meaning. As they progress, they learn to use language for self-expression, exploration and increasingly sophisticated academic communication.

Throughout the school there is an expectation that in order to foster an enjoyment and love of reading, students will be encouraged to read at home – from packaging and emails to quality literature – and will read a wide range of genres in school to understand their features. A variety of reading strategies will be introduced to support students in the mechanics of reading and comprehending the meaning of what they read. These include phonemic awareness, recognising patterns in text, decoding, making inferences, recognising a bank of sight words and etymological understanding. Teachers may also make use of guided reading and literature circles to develop students' reading skills.

The writing process of drafting, revising and finalising is modelled across languages. Literature, games, role-play and multimedia develop understanding of genre, vocabulary, sentence construction, tense and punctuation. Students analyse model texts before constructing their own written or presented pieces and develop grammatical and spelling accuracy through self-correction. From Year 6 onwards, students cite and reference sources and use bibliographies in line with IB guidance and the school's Academic Integrity Policy.

Assessment at the school aligns with the requirements of the programme(s)

Assessment is integral to teaching and learning at EISM. Using a range of tools and strategies, teachers are able to determine students' knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes towards language.

Teachers use pre-assessment to establish what students know, can do and understand. Formative assessment checks progress and provides constructive feedback and praise, while summative assessment gathers evidence of learning at the end of a unit. A range of assessment approaches is used, including teacher, peer and self-assessment against relevant IB criteria.

Assessments are reported to parents in different ways. Students receive written reports about their language learning. Parents are also invited to attend parent-teacher conferences and in Primary School, Learning Looks and Student-Led Conferences.

Collaborative planning and reflection recognises that all teachers are responsible for language development of students.

Because students learn about and through language, all teachers share responsibility for language development. Collaborative planning and reflection are embedded within staff schedules and meetings, enabling links to be developed across subjects and departments.

Professional development of staff: all teachers as “teachers of language”

EISM pursues the belief and strategic policy that all teachers should regard themselves as teachers of language. This policy is led and supported by the English and Arabic Departments, in conjunction with the school's EAL, Inclusion, other Heads of Department, classroom teachers and teaching assistants.

Targeted professional development is provided by staff and external providers through workshops and staff meetings. Teachers recognise their responsibility to develop language within their curriculum areas, for example through subject-specific glossaries, explicit teaching of key vocabulary and addressing language misconceptions.

The school utilises the resources and expertise of the community to enhance learning within the programmes.

Language teachers source a range of quality texts so students can explore different genres, languages and levels. Students also have access to online, picture and mother-tongue dictionaries, while family and community members may support authentic conversational opportunities.

ICT is an integral language-learning tool. Students may use appropriate digital and AI-supported tools for translation, practice and feedback, alongside iPads or laptops, online dictionaries and voice-activated applications. The library provides books in a range of languages, while games, art, music, maps and artefacts support contextual learning. Interactive technology and subscribed resources, including VocabExpress, Linguascope, ThinkIB and Read Write Inc., further support language development.

The wider community is a valuable language-learning resource. Visits to museums, libraries, theatres and cinemas provide opportunities to use English and Arabic in authentic contexts and deepen understanding of UAE culture. Cultural celebrations throughout the year promote international-mindedness and appreciation of the host country's culture.

Parental Involvement in the Language Profile

As part of the admissions process, families new to EISM complete a language profile questionnaire which provides information on:

- The child's first language
- Additional languages of study or fluency
- The language of the mother, father and/or guardian
- The language spoken at home
- The language of schooling
- Parent goals and preferences for their child's language learning

Language options and requirements are explained to parents on enrolment, particularly for High School students, and are outlined within this policy.

Parents are invited to celebrate and promote their mother tongue in our annual International Day celebrations.

Links to other policies

Admissions

Assessment

Academic Integrity

EAL

Inclusion

Learning & Teaching