



Emirates International School Jumeirah

Literacy Policy 2026 - 2027

Approved by:	Jayne Needham	Date: September 2025
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1. Philosophy and Rationale

At Emirates International School, Jumeirah (EISJ), we define literacy as a multidimensional set of skills that goes beyond reading and writing. It is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, and communicate using visual, audible, and digital materials across disciplines.

To supplement our IB Language Policy this Literacy Policy moves the focus from what languages we speak to how we make meaning, communicate, and engage with the world across all disciplines. In an IB continuum context and emphasises that every teacher is a teacher of literacy.

In the context of the IB Continuum, we believe literacy is the foundation of inquiry. It is the vehicle through which students develop the Approaches to Learning (ATL) skills necessary to become internationally-minded lifelong learners.

2. The Multi-Literacy Framework

We recognize that in the 21st century, being literate involves mastery over several domains:

- **Alphabetic Literacy** - Reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
- **Disciplinary Literacy** - Understanding that a mathematician reads a proof differently than a historian reads a primary source.
- **Multimodal & Digital Literacy** - Navigating and creating content through images, technology, and mixed media.
- **Cultural & Translanguaging Literacy** -Valuing the mother tongue as a cognitive tool to unlock new concepts.

3. Literacy Across the Continuum

Programme	Literacy Focus
PYP	Emergent Literacy & Inquiry A focus on play-based communication, phonological awareness, and symbolic expression through the "hundred languages of children."
MYP	Disciplinary Literacy Developing subject-specific terminologies and the ability to critique diverse text types through the Global Contexts.
DP/CP	Academic & Critical Literacy Mastery of formal academic register, complex argumentation (TOK), and professional communication skills.

4. Our Commitments

- Every Teacher is a Literacy Teacher regardless of subject area. All educators are responsible for explicitly teaching the vocabulary, text structures, and communication styles of their discipline.
- Translanguaging is a Resource. We encourage students to use their full linguistic repertoire including their mother tongue to scaffold their understanding of complex concepts.
- The Library is a Literacy Hub. Our media centers serve as the heart of the school, providing diverse physical and digital resources that reflect our students' identities and the global community.
- We assess not just the correctness of language, but the effectiveness of communication and the ability to synthesize information from various sources.

5. Professional Development

The school is committed to ongoing training for all staff in literacy strategies, including:

- Scaffolding for English Language Learners (ELL).
- Integrating digital citizenship into the curriculum.
- Developing reading stamina and critical media analysis

6. Inclusive Literacy: Supporting Diverse Learners

We recognise that students enter our continuum with varying linguistic backgrounds and learning profiles and our goal is to remove barriers to meaning-making.

A. EAL (English as an Additional Language) & Translanguaging

For our EAL learners, literacy development is an additive process, not a reductive one.

- We actively encourage students to use their home languages to brainstorm, research, and draft. This cognitive bridge allows them to engage with high-level conceptual thinking while their English academic register catches up.
- Teachers employ visual organizers, sentence frames, and bilingual glossaries to scaffold for success and to ensure that language proficiency never limits a student's ability to demonstrate inquiry
- We respect the initial stage of language acquisition, providing low-stakes opportunities for oral participation.

B. Students of Determination

Literacy for SEND students is rooted in Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

- We utilize Multi-Sensory Approaches (Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic, and Tactile) and strategies to support students with dyslexia and other processing needs.
- Students are encouraged to use Assistive Technology such as speech-to-text, audiobooks, and screen readers as legitimate tools for accessing and producing text.
- We provide small-group literacy support for those requiring intensive phonological or comprehension training.

Program Overviews

The ELL program supports students for whom English is an additional language. The goal is to enable students to fully access the curriculum and participate confidently in the school community.

Push-in and Pull-out Support

- **Push-in:** ELL specialists work alongside subject teachers in the classroom to support students in context.
- **Pull-out:** Students requiring intensive support may receive small-group instruction to focus on specific language skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening).

Assessment & Exit Process

Students are assessed regularly to monitor progress. When a student demonstrates proficiency that allows them to access the curriculum independently (typically achieving a specific phase level), they are transitioned out of the ELL program.

7. Cultivating a Culture of Reading

Reading is the engine of inquiry. At EISJ we focus on both Functional Reading (for information) and Volitional Reading (for pleasure).

Strategies for Developing Reading Excellence:

- We balance Word Recognition (phonics/decoding) with Language Comprehension (background knowledge and vocabulary).
- We develop Disciplinary Reading:
 - *Science:* Reading for cause/effect and evidence.
 - *Individuals & Societies:* Reading for bias, perspective, and source reliability.
 - *Mathematics:* Decoding word problems and symbolic notation.
- We dedicate time for sustained silent reading where students choose their own texts, including graphic novels and non-fiction, to build reading stamina and reading identity.
- Every classroom, regardless of subject, features Word Walls and Concept Collections to make the invisible vocabulary of the unit visible and accessible.

8. Home-School Literacy Partnership

Literacy development does not stop at the school gates. We support parents by:

1. Hosting Literacy Workshops to explain our phonics and inquiry-based reading approaches.
2. Encouraging families to read in their Home Language, which strengthens the neural pathways required for English literacy.
3. Providing access to digital libraries (e.g., Epic, Sora) that allow for reading at home across multiple devices.