AICS Whole School Language Policy

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Contents

Glossary

Definition of terms (in order of appearance)

Best Language - The Language the student is most proficient in (often referred to as native language and/or the language spoken at home)

Language and Literature - the course of study taught at native, near-native level for our students

Literacy - the ability to read and write

Language Acquisition - Course of study offered at school for students learning a language that is not their best language

Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) - refers to language development used for social purposes

(CALPS) - language development for academic purposes

Language Philosophy

Language is fundamental to forming identity, social development, communication and learning. It "plays a vital role in the construction of meaning…. Empowers the learners and provides an intellectual framework to support conceptual development and critical thinking." (International Baccalaureate Organization, Developing Academic Literacy in IB Programmes) We consider these elements as being interlinked and integral to personal growth.

As a community, we are committed to using language in authentic contexts to promote understanding, and to communicate clearly. We understand that diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds influence our communication, both as senders and receivers.

We distinguish between best language development, language acquisition and, more holistically, literacy. We value diversity, recognise that many people are multilingual, and may be proficient in various languages in different areas and to varying degrees. A diverse language identity and therefore, a diverse cultural identity is representative for our internationally mobile community and deserves to be celebrated. The many different perspectives often inherent to language help to foster understanding.

Students should continue to develop their best language as this facilitates cognitive development and is a key element in developing a positive self-image and cultural identity (International Baccalaureate Organisation) encouraging international mindedness and being open-minded. For this reason, we encourage parents to continue to focus on the development of the best language. At school, we understand the importance of academic language development in the students' best language by providing access to as many languages as possible. Within the school curriculum, this includes Language and Literature in Dutch and English, as well as the School-Supported Self-Taught Literature Programme in the Diploma Programme. In addition to the regular curriculum, we facilitate best-language clubs for a few languages on Thursday mornings.

Language acquisition is a key skill in our continuously changing and developing world. The IB Learner Profile attribute "communicators" states the need for us to "express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language…" (International Baccalaureate Organisation) This ability provides us with the chance to access opportunities globally and helps towards developing equity. Language acquisition is "not just learning about the language" (Council of Europe); Language learners

are "social agents" (Council of Europe): language has a social function and learning the language demands genuine inquiry, collaboration and communication.

At AICS, our language of instruction and working language is English; we recognise that this limits access to the learning for some of our students. In the Middle Years Programme, for students who have little to no knowledge of English, we offer additional support for Phase 1 and Phase 2 through our extended English Language Acquisition Programme. We are committed to students receiving the support to bridge this gap as best possible. We offer English as a best language as well as a language acquisition.

As a Dutch International school with community as one of our pillars, we are committed to students learning and developing Dutch as a best language and as language acquisition. This is also a legal requirement. Our commitment extends to valuing celebrating and understanding the language as well as the culture and using opportunities in our local community.

All our teachers are language teachers and are committed to helping students overcome language and literacy barriers that hinder them from accessing the curriculum using the appropriate differentiation tools.

Fitting with our vision of diversity, we have a body of international staff. We invest in the need to facilitate improving English for staff provide opportunities to learn Dutch.

Some of our students have learning challenges not directly related to language; however, language can play a significant role in a student's development. We are careful to identify and distinguish between the challenges and aim to target our support appropriately (for additional information please see our Inclusion Policy (currently in development)).

We are committed to supporting students with their development in languages; however, we do need to acknowledge that despite ample resources, we do have limitations to what we can achieve. We offer various levels and opportunities for language development within the school as well as with external partners and agencies. We strive to ensure that students are able to develop their literacy skills, their best language and acquisition languages at an appropriate level. This requires commitment from the students, parents, teachers and school.

School Language Profile

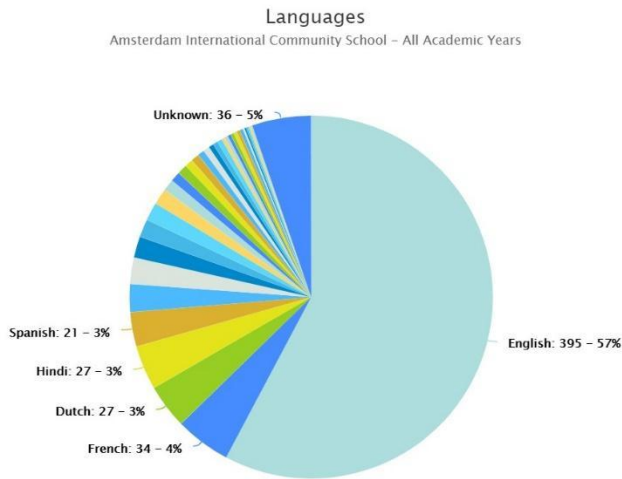Languages indicated as spoken first languages during the admissions process[1]:

Languages
Amsterdam International Community School – All Academic Years

Unknown: 36 – 5%
English: 395 – 57%
Spanish: 21 – 3%
Hindi: 27 – 3%
Dutch: 27 – 3%
French: 34 – 4%

Figure 1 Best languages spoken (Iyoyo, Languages)

Nationalities indicated as first nationalities during the admissions process:

Nationalities
Amsterdam International Community School – All Academic Years

Indian (India): 380 – 27%
Dutch (Netherlands): 214 – 15%
British: 100 – 7%
American (United States): 92 – 6%
Japanese: 80 – 5%
Italian (Italy): 54 – 3%
French (France): 47 – 3%
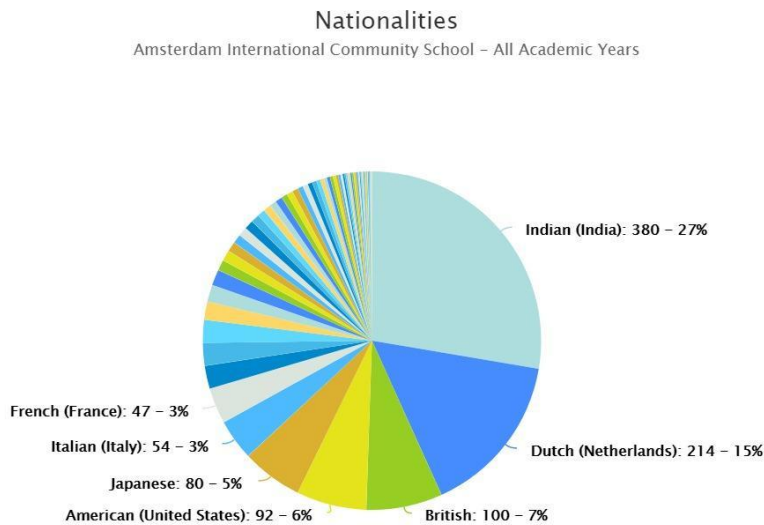
Figure 2 Nationalities (Iyoyo, Nationalities)

Many of our students have more than one nationality. In addition, they are often multilingual and have a variety of language experiences at school and at home. At AICS we strive to create a language friendly environment, where all cultural identities and languages are accepted and valued.

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[1] These figures, in both charts are indications given by the parents during the initial admissions process.

At school both our working language and our language of instruction is British English. For referencing purposes, we use MLA (for further guidance please refer to the relevant section of our (Academic Honesty Policy).

As a Dutch international school, many of our support staff need to communicate with local partners. Fitting with the IB learner profile of Communicator, we aim to hire support staff that speak both English and Dutch and where possible an additional language.

At present, a sizeable majority of our school population are fluent in English, therefore, most documentation is provided in English. We will continue to monitor the need for publication in other languages. All members of the community if they do not speak English are welcome to request help with understanding of these documents.

As many of the documents that we work with in the school were originally written in Dutch. The director determines which documents need to be translated. The school has a budget to allow for official translation of said documents.

While English may be the official language of instruction and communication within the school, as an inclusive community, we encourage all members of the community to practice speaking the languages they wish. When doing so, we do need to be mindful that all parties feel included.

Another important aspect of language use is to focus on using language to facilitate communication, being respectful of each other and (Amsterdam International Community School) focusing on open communication.

The School is committed to developing a common language across both the Primary School and the Secondary School in order to facilitate communication and the transition from Primary to Secondary.

Language Pathways at School

We acknowledge that all students learn languages at their own pace. As students have a variety of, often complex, language backgrounds we value their engagement and personal development above their achievements in comparison to others.

Primary School

Dutch and English are offered to all students based on their skills and background.

Students with very little or no English in Group 1 follow all classes with their peers according to the total immersion model.

Students from Group 2 to Group 7 follow their lessons in English. Dutch is provided at the appropriate level for their development. Students have pull out sessions in both languages to reinforce their learning starting in group 3. The exception to this are students who come to the school and do not speak any English; these students initially do not follow Dutch.

The model used to determine the level and type of learning is based on Jim Cumin's theory for Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) model (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2014), where students primarily use language for social interaction or for academic learning respectively.

Students who start at the AICS with English as their best language follow regular classes according to the CALP language pathway. Students follow an extra hour of English language development per week if they follow the Dutch BICS development.

Students who are starting on the BICS pathway for English have an extra pull out session for English. Students with proven Dutch best language following the CALPS pathway for Dutch receive an extra hour of Dutch a week (instead of English). Most students in Primary follow BICS for Dutch.

The aim is for students to develop their BICS, and once they have developed well in this area they are moved into developing CALPS, this occurs in close consultation between the language specialists and the classroom teachers.

Transitioning from Primary to Secondary School

The Language Acquisition Policy is the starting point for the transition from Primary to Secondary. Students new to the school will follow the same procedure as all students.

In order to ensure a smooth transition from Primary to Secondary, the BICS and CALPS level of development is used as a guideline. In addition, to supplement this, group 7 students will receive a standard placement test for both Dutch and English in order to determine the correct level for the MYP programme. Subject Area Coordinators of both Primary and Secondary liaise to determine entry level. At the end of the school year the list may be slightly adjusted with input from the teachers. At the beginning of MYP1 the Dutch and English teachers assess the appropriate language proficiency level according to the MYP language programme expectations.

Secondary School

The Middle Years Programme

From MYP 1 onwards, students follow both English and Dutch at their own level, as either Language Acquisition or Language and Literature. We do strive to have students transition to a Language and Literature course as soon as possible in order to ensure meeting the holistic requirements of the Middle Years Programme.

From MYP 2 onwards, students must follow an extra language in addition to Dutch and English. The choices for the languages are French, Spanish and German; all students must choose one of these. All of these languages start with phase 1 in MYP2, only one level is taught per year level, please see the table below.

"Students must choose a language that both challenges them and provides an opportunity for academic success" (International Baccalaureate Organization, Language Acquisition Guide). Unfortunately, at present we are not able to offer alternative levels of languages. We realise that this will affect the choices and language development of some of our students and therefore ask parents and students to carefully consider their choices and resulting implications.

In order to transition from one phase or level to the next, the respective teachers decide based on the progression of the student. For Dutch and English this may occur throughout the year, typically at the end of a term or at the end of a unit.

Dutch Language Proficiency Support

We do not have a structured system in place for students wishing to transition to Dutch schools. If possible, we will attempt to facilitate this, but cannot guarantee that we can accomplish this.

English Language Acquisition Phase 1 and 2 Extension Programme

The English Language Acquisition Phase 1 and 2 Extension Programme is designed to help students with no English or very little English when they come to the AICS:

- All students follow English language classes four days a week, the first two periods a day, in addition to regular classes in order to learn English and develop their discrete language skills.

- A full day at the beginning of the week is devoted to language-specific needs of the curriculum. This part of the extension course focuses on the students language needs to transition to the mainstream curriculum.

- Phase 1 and 2 students will engage in social language-learning activities one afternoon per week at the end of the week.
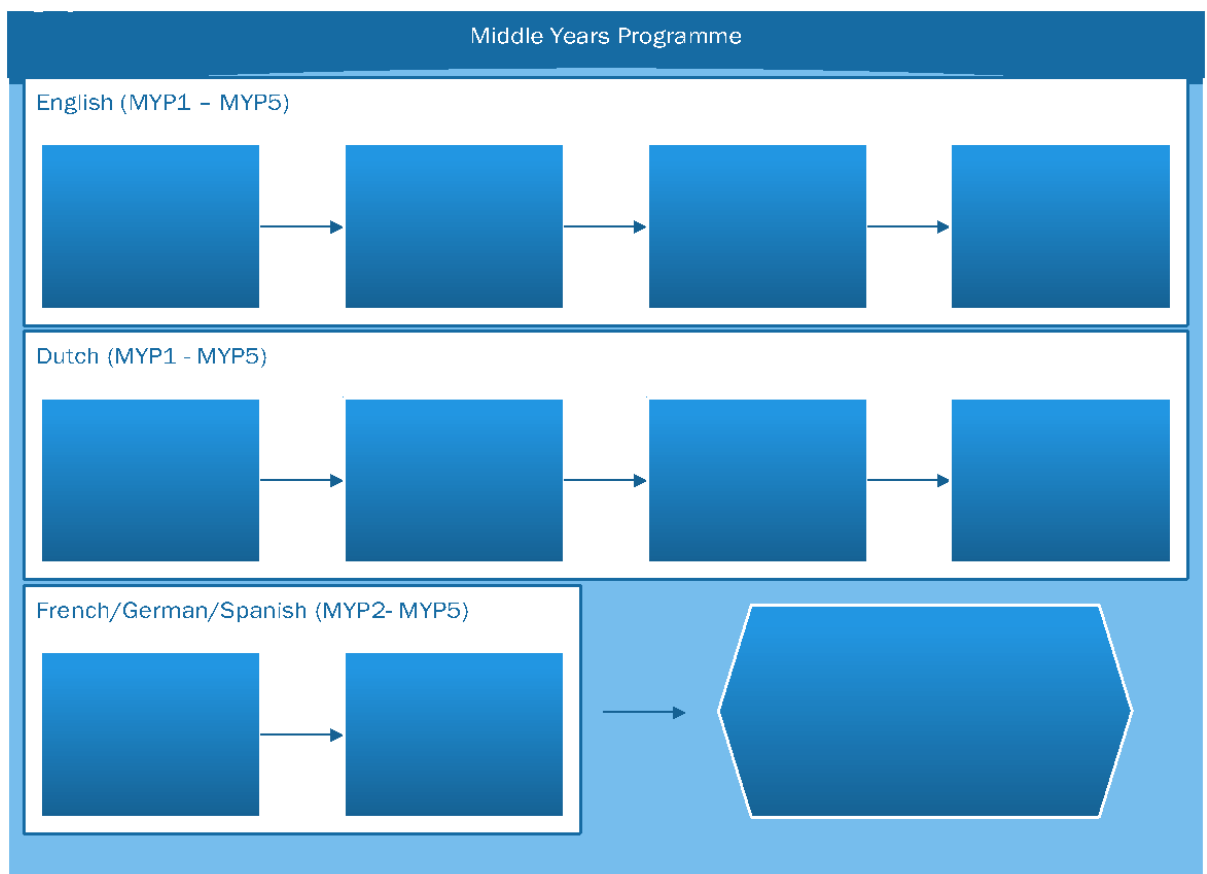
The Careers Programme (to be implemented August 2020)

For the Careers Programme students will need to follow a Standard Level English course making the appropriate choice from English Literature, English Language or English B. Students will also have access the School-Supported self-taught Literature Programme.

Language Acquisition development portfolio

For students wishing to attend Dutch Professional Universities, or who are considering staying in the Netherlands we highly recommend following an appropriate level of Dutch.

Students with diverse backgrounds have diverse interests and needs; students will receive the support and guidance necessary to pursue an appropriate language development course. Possibilities will include but may not be exclusive to online course, other external providers, and self-study courses (monitored). The Language development supervisor, in consultation with the student and mentor will determine an appropriate course of development.

As in the other programmes, students should choose a language option that offers the appropriate level of challenge. Final decisions will be approved by the Head of School Upper Secondary on advice from the Careers Programme Coordinator.

The Diploma Programme

Languages offered in the Diploma Programme:

Group1 - Studies in Language and Literature	Group 2 - Studies in Language Acquisition
English Language and Literature English Literature Dutch Language and Literature School-Supported Self Taught	English B Spanish B German B French B Spanish Ab Initio German Ab Initio Options provided by Pamoja*

*Pamoja is a DP course provider with official recognition from the International Baccalaureate Organisation.

Students may choose one language from Group 1 and one language from Group 2
Or
Two languages from Group 1
For more details on admission requirements for the Diploma Programme please see our admissions policy and/or the School Guide. For more specific subject requirements please contact the Careers Counsellors.
Classes will only be started up for the above course if there are sufficient students.
No more than 4 students may follow the same Pamoja class.

Determining the Language Level for DP

In order to determine a student's language choice for DP, we follow the language pathways recommendation of the IB (see table below). In addition, the following considerations will be taken into account:
- The language level must offer an appropriate level of challenge.
- The language ability should be in line with the students overall academic achievement.

- The level of language taken in MYP4 will form the starting point of the discussion.
- The Language Portfolio may be consulted to see development over time.
- The student's future study plans.

	MYP	DP
Phase 1		Ab initio
Phase 2		Ab initio (in rare cases) Language B SL
Phase 3		Language B SL
Phase 4		Language B SL/HL
Phase 5		Language B SL/HL
Phase 5	It is recommended the student has at least one semester in MYP language and literature before starting these DP courses.	Language A: literature SL Language A: language and literature SL Literature and performance SL
Phase 6	It is recommended the student has at least one semester in MYP language and literature before starting these DP courses.	Language A: literature SL/HL Language A: language and literature SL/HL Literature and performance SL

Possible IB continuum pathways (International Baccalaureate Organization, MYP Language Acquisition Guide)

The final decision will be made by the Head of School Upper Secondary on advice from the Diploma Programme Coordinator. If the students and parents do not agree, they may follow the Esprit complaints procedure as outlined on our website.

The School-Supported Self-Taught Literature Programme

The SSST programme is a course of study that students can follow who wish to study a best language, Group 1 language that we do not offer. The possibility to follow this course will depend on the student's level, availability and access to appropriate language support.

The school provides a supervisor who monitors the students' progress, provides instruction on general literary features and works in translation and language-specific tutor who is involved in assessing a number of papers and providing feedback.

As of 2019-2020, three lesson hours will be allocated.

For students following the MYP at the AICS wishing to take Spanish, Italian or French self-taught we strongly advise following the Best language Programme.

The Extended Essay

Students may choose to do their Extended Essays in one of the four IB Languages: English, Spanish, French or Mandarin (this may only take place if we have in-school staff that can support the student in this language.

Theory of Knowledge and Language Development

Learning a language in the Diploma Programme is not only about learning the language but also about how concepts and cultural aspects are expressed through other languages. Theory of Knowledge provides a platform to develop this in depth.

Language and Assessment

All taught languages as part of the IB programmes (including the self-taught option) are assessed according to the MYP, CP or DP language criteria. As the IB is expanding their language options for these exams please contact the Middle Years programme Coordinator for the most updated information. For additional information, please refer to our assessment policy and the relevant subject guides.

Students following English Language Acquisition Phase 1 have different assessment requirements - please see the assessment policy.

MYP5 e-assessments

Students can take Dutch Language and Literature and/or English language and Literature MYP 5 e-assessments. Students following the best language courses in MYP may opt to take the respective Language and Literature MYP e-assessments if available. In some circumstances students may be able to opt for a different Language and Literature option, for more information please consult the MYP Coordinator.

The Language Portfolio

All students at AICS create and continue to develop a Language Portfolio during their time at school. The aims of the language portfolio are:

- for the students to raise their awareness of their own development;
- to allow students to map and shape their language development;
- to allow students to identify their language needs and ambitions;
- to set goals for future language development;
- to provide students with a platform to showcase their language development achievements;
- to provide a platform where students and parents can be engaged in planning the student's language development.

In addition, older students will be able to use the process to ensure they make appropriate choices for further educational and career plans.
The students will be able to showcase their achievements, track their own development and set goals for the future. The ideal opportunity at school will be the Student-led conferences.

Literacy

We recognise the importance of reading comprehension and that it affects all areas of learning in all subject areas. Language is a main tool for communication and learning and aids cognitive development (Language and learning in IB Programmes). In addition, language can be regarded as a processing tool.

Primary School

In the primary school, we encourage students to develop agency in authentic reading and writing and emphasise choice, as this is an important motivational factor. Through Reading and Writing workshops, students develop skills, strategies, processes and concepts in Literacy. Our instruction is based on the concept-based curriculum theory of Dr. Lois A. Lanning and Dr. Lynn Erickson. While we aim to integrate much of literacy instruction into transdisciplinary units, we recognise the importance of discrete skills and processes unique to literacy. Therefore, we will often design parallel literacy units targeting these skills and processes alongside other units of inquiry.

Primary students have a take-home reading programme where children practice reading skills and strategies with short, instructional texts. These texts are not levelled and children learn to make good choices of books that are right for them. These books differ from the books that they bring home from their weekly library visits. In the Library, students are encouraged to exercise choice and develop a love of reading with rich text literature.

The school encourages peer reading. The peer reading programme provides free choice as well as direction. According to the programme model followed, reading becomes even more valuable for students when purpose is added to the reading experience. Teachers are expected to engage in this programme.

Secondary School

In the Secondary School, reading skills form part of the Approaches to learning Skills and thus all subjects focus on the development of literacy throughout the course of study.

Best Language Development and Support

The school recognises that the development of the students' best language is important on many levels of personal development as outlined in our language Philosophy. Even though we are not able to meet the needs of all our students, we do encourage students to continue to develop their best language and/or language spoken at home through exposure, speaking, reading in the language and encourage parents to have an active role in this.

Within the Amsterdam community, there also opportunities to further their development in the best language. Please bear in mind that the number of language schools and languages they offer may change and they may have waiting lists.

Some best languages or language spoken home are offered at by the school at school some are provided by external agencies on the school premises and others take place elsewhere in the community as outlined below.

The following best language learning opportunities were available at the time this document was compiled. The list for schools in the community may well not be complete. While we are committed to opportunities offered at school, these will vary depending on the availability of people to run them and the demand.

Primary School Best language Development Opportunities

Library Reading Sessions

During the Library reading sessions, parents read to a small group of children in their best language.

After School Clubs (available at AICS)

Mandarin
Turkish
Italian
Spanish
Hindi

Secondary School Best Language Development Opportunities

Best Language Development

These courses take place as extra-curricular activities on Thursday mornings. Students may take part at no extra charge. The courses are designed to follow the MYP language principles. We highly recommend that students wishing or considering taking School-Supported Self-Taught Literature Programme follow these in to access the course in the Diploma Programme.
We currently offer:

- Italian
- French
- Spanish

Community Language Schools

The link below shows all the language schools available for children of all ages in Amsterdam/Amstelveen. Some but not all of these use the AICS school building.

[Community Language Schools](#)

Library

Whole School

We have an excellent library suited to the needs of students, staff and parents. With over 45,000 items available for loan, we house a modern collection that aims to provide for a wide range of interests as well as supporting the various curricula and professional development needs. Our library is accessible from 8am – 5pm each school day. The library is located across the three locations.

Primary School

The library provides students with the opportunity to develop their reading skills and general interests. Classes attend every week and the library is open to families outside of school hours.

Parent literacy workshops are organised to help develop literacy in the home environment

Secondary School

MYP 1 and MYP 2 have 45 minutes per week assigned reading time in the library.
Older students can find relevant research material and receive help from the library staff to do so.
For the MYP 5 and DP students, the library staff play a key role in helping them find more academic research and to support their research through the use of EBSCO https://search.ebscohost.com), an online data bank with access to a wide variety of academic writing.

Language Support Provided by the School

The school is committed to providing language support to all stakeholders in order to facilitate learning and acknowledging that our diverse community needs support in developing skills but also in order to ensure alignment in terms of practice and understanding

Support for Students

Aim Higher

We offer Subject-Specific Aim Higher where students may be linked to a language teacher that can provide language-focused support.

CAS and Language Learning

DP Students run a tutoring club and may tutor in languages as part of their Creativity Activity and Service.

Learning Diversity and Language Needs

Students with diverse learning needs often require additional support with languages. This may be provided in Aim Higher as explained above. In addition, external agencies or our qualified Learning Diversity Specialists may offer the necessary support. Depending on the situation - specific language learning requirements will be registered in the students Individual Education Plan. Students with particular language difficulties may have access to Individual assessment arrangements - please refer to Student Support Profile for more details.

Support for Staff

On a regular basis,
- all teachers receive training in being language teachers
- all teacher receive training in differentiation strategies for language learning
- all teachers receive training in intercultural competence

Non-teaching staff receive regular training with regards to the implementation of various policies.

The Espritscholengroep provides optional courses for teachers to study Dutch and/or English. The courses are provided by external agencies and teachers can follow at their own level, assuming there are sufficient participants. Teachers are also able to take relevant accredited exams. The school pays for this as part of the professional development for staff.

Diploma Programme students may also provide tutoring to a teacher in a language as part of their Creativity Activity and Service.

Support for Parents

The school acknowledges the need for parents to understand our learning strategies in order to help support their children's education at home. We offer Literacy workshops and other language and education related workshops on a regular basis either during the day or during parents evenings.

Other Relevant Documents and Policies

ELIP Policy (to be reviewed as Extended English Language Acquisition for Phases 1 and 2)
Language Acquisition Policy
Inclusion Policy
Admissions Policy
Assessment Policy
Student Support Profile
Policy Review Cycle (currently being developed)

Language Policy Review Cycle

The school reviews the Language Policy every three year following Policy Review Cycle (currently under development)

Action: 2019-2020
Reflection: 2020-2021
Inquiry: 2021 - 2022

Language Policy Committee

This Language Policy has been compiled by a wide selection of representatives of our school community: Secondary School students, parents, teachers; Primary School parents, teachers, IB Coordinator, Leader for Learning Secondary, Language Subject Area Coordinator Primary and Secondary, Administrative, Student-Support and Library staff. Some of the members involved were also language-development specialists.

The process followed was that of the Design Cycle.

Further Considerations

The Language Policy Committee has identified a number of areas that require further development. These have been split out into Areas for Immediate Follow Up and Further Developments. The areas for immediate follow up have been deemed as those requiring attention first. The others will be taken up at a later point. If you are interested in helping in the development in any of these then please let us know (n.foley@aics.espritscholen.nl).

Actions

- Introduction of Language Portfolio and Celebrating European Language Day annually on 26 September
- Development of the Extension programme for English Language Acquisition Phases 1 and 2 to replace the current English Language Immersion Programme

- To incorporate MYP1 taster lessons for the languages they choose in MYP2 during International Language Day.

Further Developments

o   How might we enable students to take official certificates in some languages such as Dele, Delf and Goethe Instituut, Cambridge etc.?

o   How might we develop a programme focussing on targeted Intervention for students with no best language in order to provide equity of education (international Baccalaureate Organization, Guidelines for Developing a School Language Policy, p 1)

o   How might me introduce and implement translingualism

o   How might we further improve student literacy - How can all teachers reinforce reading comprehension strategies better?

o   How might we form Language clubs? For example: Breakfast club, lunch cafe, afternoon language tea - and could parents play a supporting role?

o   How might we ensure that we address the Primary year programme language development requirements in time for the transition to the Primary Years Programme?

o   How might we develop a whole school language scope and sequence?

o   How might we further integrate language learning with interdisciplinary planning

o   How might we facilitate more Dutch language learning in Primary?

o   How might we facilitate accessing the documentation for parents who do not speak English?

o   How might we make the library more relevant to teaching?

o   How might we further develop intercultural understanding?

o   How might we further improve the visibility and celebration of multilingualism?

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