

Language Policy

ROTTERDAM INTERNATIONAL SECONDARY SCHOOL

Draft for approval

Language Policy Monitoring - This policy is to be reviewed and updated every two years or when external accreditation bodies, such as the IB, require it.

Purpose of this document:

- To respond to our school mission and vision.
- To outline our beliefs about language development
- To clarify current practice for students, teachers, parents and visitors to the school
- To align with the IB Mission Statement for Internationalism and International Mindedness.
- To respond to external accreditation bodies (CIS, NEASC, IB DP, Wolfert) to put principles into practice by having immediate on students' lives.

This document was put together in 2018/2019 by Lynn Libert and Marietjie Swart, in consultation from staff.

The document is informed by the [IB guidelines for developing a language policy](#), our School Mission, Vision and Core Values and the aspirations of our Learner Profile Plus. This policy will be reviewed in September 2021. The policy itself is aligned with the RISS Teaching and Learning Policy, Assessment Policy, Academic Honesty Policy, and the Admissions Policy

Contents

[Admission of New Students](#)

[English language throughout the curriculum](#)

[Language development in the English curriculum](#)

[Support for EAL students](#)

[The Dutch curriculum](#)

[The Foreign Languages curriculum](#)

[Heritage language development](#)

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Admission of New Students

- All students are given an English test upon entry, which involves reading comprehension and listening.
- Assessment is made by the EAL department using the Common European Framework for Languages. Borderline students are admitted if we can be sure we can put in place the appropriate support.

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English language throughout the curriculum

Our beliefs

- The English Language is at the heart of the curriculum and the language of instruction.
- It is fundamental to assure that every student is supported to access the curriculum and culture of the school through the medium of English.
- All teachers are language literacy teachers within their disciplines - developing students' literacy *of* their subject and literacy *through* their subject. All teachers are required to attend a personal development course called, "Unlocking the World, English in the Mainstream" in order to be able to help all learners with the language of instruction, i.e., English.

Language development in the English curriculum

Our beliefs

- The English Language is at the heart of the curriculum and the language of instruction.
- Language development is central to fostering academic progress, creative and critical thinking, intercultural awareness, international mindedness and personal identity among our students.
- All teachers are language literacy teachers within their disciplines - developing students' literacy *of* their subject and literacy *through* their subject.
- Literacy skills are at the core of the English curriculum. English language lessons at the RISS deliver core literacy skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Current practice

- At the end of grade 8, students who have taken French and/or Spanish, will take the following external evaluated exam.
 - DELF (Diplôme d'études en langue française) exam
 - D.E.L.E (Diplomas de Español como Lengua Extranjera) exam

- Baseline data for incoming and current EAL students is collected using off2class.com to determine EAL levels of Beginners, Intermediate and Upper-Intermediate.

Courses

- Grades 6 - 8:
 - Combined language and literature courses along with
 - EAL with different proficiency levels
 - EAL Support classes when needed.
- Grades 9&10:
 - Combined First Language English and World Literature,
 - English as a Second language supported with English as another language courses
 - and, in some cases, ESL (English as a Second Language as it is referred to in the IGCSE) combined with World Literature.
- Grades 11&12:
 - IB English A Literature,
 - IB English B
 - IB Chinese ab Initio
 - IB Spanish ab initio
 - IB Own language literature known as Lit A SSST(SL only)

Support for EAL students

Our beliefs

- It is fundamental to assure that students are supported to access the curriculum and culture of the school through the medium of English.
- We admit students to the school whose level of English is such that they can access the curriculum, but recognise that some students need additional support.

- Upon admission into the school, foundation students will take a MidYIS assessment exam (baseline assessment). Parents will be invited for a conversation with the Head of the Foundation Years if the findings of the assessment are such that further evaluation (i.e. additional EAL assessment) of the student is deemed necessary.

Current practice

Foundation years

- All non-native English speakers are tested at the beginning of the school year to determine their English language proficiency. Should a student test into the program, three proficiency levels are offered:
 - EAL Beginner level,
 - EAL Intermediate level
 - EAL Upper-Intermediate level
- At the discretion of the Head of Foundation and the Curriculum Leader for Languages, students may be re-evaluated after the first term, this is to support students' progression.
- All students are tested again at the end of the school year to determine whether they stay in the program or move up a level. The exception to this is Grade 8 students who are tested in March due to subject choices for IGCSE.
- EAL Beginners will have 4 lessons per week which runs parallel with English First Language. As students progress into the next EAL level, they also take English as a first language to broaden their exposure to the language.
- An EAL support programme is also offered for EAL students and is mandatory for EAL beginner level students.
- EAL Intermediate and Upper-Intermediate level will have two lessons of EAL per week.

IGCSE

- Students who test into EAL in gr 9 and gr 10, will be offered the opportunity to sit IGCSE ESL (English as a Second Language). At the discretion of the Curriculum Leader for Languages, they may also take World Literature in place of EAL (not to be confused with ESL). However, if it is determined that their level of English is such that they cannot function in World Literature, students may have to take EAL instead.

IB

- English B (at HL level only) is offered as part of the IBDP for students whose English is not proficient for English A and students are encouraged to complete a bilingual diploma by completing Lit A SSST (SL only) in conjunction with their other Language A courses, or by taking two Language A courses.

- Students who have taken IGCSE First Language and are continuing their education in the IB, should not take their first language as a Language B course in IB. The only exception would be if, after taking the IGCSE First Language Exam, and a student has achieved a grade D or lower, and it is determined that they have a language issue, will it be considered, but it is up to the discretion of the Deputy Principal and the IB Coordinator if a student can be placed in said Language B course.
- It is compulsory for all students in the DP to choose either English A or English B.

Bilingual Diploma

- Students have several paths to meet the requirements for Groups 1 and 2 of the IBDP:
- Students may take Lit A English HL/SL with Dutch Language and Literature HL/SL; again, this will allow for the possibility of a bilingual diploma
- Students may take English B HL (acquisition) with either Lit A SSST SL or Dutch Language and Literature HL/SL; this will allow for the possibility of a bilingual diploma
- Students may take Lit A English HL/SL and a Group 2 language for a regular IBDP diploma

The Dutch curriculum

Our beliefs

- As it is the national language of the Netherlands, every student should have the opportunity to study Dutch.
- As the RISS is also a Dutch Government school, all students are required by law to study Dutch, until they enter the IBDP programme.
- Exposure to the language and culture beyond the classroom are important to ensure optimum progress, and help students immerse themselves into the Dutch community, society and its heritage culture.

Current Practice

Foundation years

- Students who had some exposure to the language are tested at the beginning of the school year and again at the end of the school year. New students are tested as they come into the school.
- EAL beginner students do not have to take Dutch, until they move out of EAL beginner level into EAL intermediate.
- There are 4 proficiency levels:
 - Dutch foreign beginner
 - Dutch foreign intermediate
 - Dutch foreign advanced
 - Dutch first language

IGCSE (Middle Years Program)

- All students are required to take Dutch either as a Foreign language or a first language in IGCSE years.
- Grade 10 Dutch first language students in 2019/2020 will take a Dutch at a CEFR Level (Common European Framework Reference) compatible to first language at the end of Grade 10. This will be coordinated by the Dutch teachers and the Curriculum Leader for Languages
- Grade 9 Dutch first language students starting in 2019/2020 will take the Dutch VMBO exam in 2021.
- All students will sit the Dutch Foreign Language Exam in IGCSE until 2020.

IB

- Dutch is not a compulsory subject in the IB. Subject choices in the IB, including languages, must be approved by the IB Lead and the Deputy Principal. Students may choose one Group 1 language such as Lit A SSST SL and/ or Dutch Language and Literature HL/SL) for a bilingual diploma where the Group 1 language is different from the learning language of the other Groups.
- The options for Lit A SSST are bound by the languages offered by the IB. However, there is a possibility to ask for a special request language 18 months in advance.

The Foreign Languages curriculum

Our beliefs

- The learning of foreign languages is important for intercultural understanding, the overall language development of the child, and cognitive development in general.
- All students should have the opportunity to learn a foreign language.
- The foreign language programme also offers students with a heritage language in the selection, an opportunity to continue their learning of their own heritage language.

Current Practice

Foundation years

- In grade 6 and 7 students who are English First Language students, have the option of two foreign languages out of the following: (2 periods per week)
 - French
 - Spanish
 - German
 - Chinese.
- **Selection 1**
Students not taking EAL will select one of the following languages offered ; French, German, Spanish or Chinese.
- **Selection 2**
All the English First Language students and ALL the EAL Students whose heritage language is either, French, Spanish, German or Chinese, will take one of these languages (they cannot choose the same language as in Selection 1).
English First Language Students who do not have a heritage language, select a second language different from the first selection.
- EAL Beginners do not take any foreign languages unless it is their Heritage Language.
- EAL Intermediate and Upper-Intermediate - If one of the foreign languages offered is their Heritage Language, they take that language. Otherwise they choose "only" one of the selections below as their foreign language:
 - French

- Spanish
- German
- Chinese
- In Grade 8 - For English First Language Students, if students have taken both French and Spanish before, they will continue with French and Spanish in Grade 8. If they have exited the EAL Program at the end of Grade 7, then they can take either French or Spanish in Grade 8.
- EAL Beginners do not take any foreign languages unless it is their Heritage Language.
- EAL Intermediates take Dutch only and their Heritage Language if it is offered.
- EAL Upper-Intermediates take French or Spanish.

IGCSE

- In grades 9 and 10 students are required to take Dutch and have the option of choosing either French or Spanish.
- In order to choose French or Spanish, students must have been exposed to these languages for a minimum of two years prior to starting the IGCSE.
- *The most important consideration is that the course should be a challenging educational experience for the student.*

IB

- Students select six subjects from the six groups within the IBDP. At RISS, Group 1 offers languages in the following subjects:
 - Group 1:
 - Lit A English HL/SL
 - Dutch A Language and Literature HL/SL
 - Lit A SSST SL
- However, as it is compulsory to select either English A or English B as a choice, the choice for a second language depends. Depending on this choice, students
 - In Group 2 RISS offers the following languages:
 - Dutch B HL/SL
 - English B HL only
 - Spanish B HL/SL

- Spanish ab initio SL only
 - Chinese ab initio SL only
 - French B HL/SL
 - French ab initio SL only
- However, the choices available to students at RISS are bound by the fact that it is compulsory to select either English A or English B as a language choice. The choice of a second language, in reality must thus be made from the following list:
- Dutch A Language and Literature HL/SL
 - Lit A SSST SL
 - Dutch B HL/SL
 - Spanish B HL/SL
 - Spanish ab initio SL only
 - Chinese ab initio SL only
 - French B HL/SL
 - French ab initio SL only

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Heritage Language development

Our beliefs

- The development and maintenance of students' heritage language literacy is central to their cognitive development and their understanding of self and culture.
- As IBO World School teachers, we strive to support multilingualism as essential to increasing intercultural understanding and international mindedness. We strive to demonstrate and facilitate the learner profile attributes.
- Heritage language development supports students who may return to their home countries or to widen employment opportunities.
- We strive to provide support for mother tongue development for any language as far as this is possible.
- It is our belief that students should take their heritage language, if it is offered in the school.

Current Practice

Foundation Years

- One of the guiding principles, at RISS, is to encourage our students to respect and honour their heritage language and culture. It is important that all languages are equally valued in our school and, to the extent possible, we will work with the students, families and staff to encourage this ethos.

Presently, in the Foundation years, we offer Chinese (Mandarin), Dutch, French, German and Spanish to accommodate not only heritage language learners but students who also wish to add these languages to their linguistic skill set.

To encourage community development in the school, we try to link our senior students with our junior students, who share the same heritage language. This contributes to furthering the development of their language skills through speaking, reading, writing and listening. This benefits both senior and junior students in a multitude of ways and contributes to the international-mindedness of our school.

IGCSE

- We offer students to continue their heritage languages as self-study in languages offered by the IGCSE (a list can be obtained upon request to the Head of Middle Years).

IB

- Students may have the opportunity to obtain a bilingual diploma. Students may do this by completing Lit A SSST SL in conjunction with their other Language A courses or by taking two Language A courses.
- In the IB, students should take their heritage language if it is offered in the school, as an A Language.
- A student may not take their Heritage Language as a B language.

Acronyms

- IBDP - International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme
- EAL - English as another language - Additional English Support
- ESL - English as a second language - IGCSE Exam Class
- IB - International Baccalaureate
- IGCSE - International General Certificate of Secondary Education
- SSST - School Supported Self Taught
- SL - Standard Level in IB
- HL- Higher Level in IB