

## NIS Language Philosophy

### School Mission

Nanjing International School is an inclusive learning community inspiring international mindedness, personal excellence, creative thinking.

### Core Beliefs

Language is a catalyst for intercultural understanding, the foundation for **international-mindedness** and the expression of cultural identity. Multilingualism facilitates language learning within our **inclusive learning community**. Our approach to language learning enriches **personal excellence** and **creative thinking** within all our learners.

We **burst the bubble** by engaging with our local context both inside and outside of school. We make connections with our host country and show appreciation for Chinese culture and language by learning Mandarin, while acknowledging the unique linguistic and cultural profiles of the learning community.

Multilingualism and our strategic goal to **burst the bubble** are drivers towards interculturalism at NIS. **Student voice** and **choice** are reflected in the approach to language learning across the school.

The NIS community shares these common beliefs about language:

- Language is central to learning, a means of inclusion and active membership in the NIS learning community;
- All teachers at NIS are teachers of language;
- English is the primary language of inclusion in the NIS learning community;
- Multilingualism is a right, responsibility and resource for student learning throughout all sections of the school;
- The development and the maintenance of students' home language(s) is considered a key component to students' academic success;
- The language and culture of our host country is valued and respected through exposure to, and the teaching of, Mandarin language and culture from PreK – Grade 12;
- Language learning at NIS supports the development of international mindedness in all students, while facilitating a lifelong enthusiasm for language learning;
- Students' language development requires collaboration between all members of the NIS learning community;
- The language philosophy is a working document supported by all members of the NIS learning community.

## Language Practices & Procedures at NIS

The NIS community supports the implementation and promotion of the NIS language philosophy in the following ways

*The school will:*

- provide language development opportunities for all learners in all sections of the school;
- provide support for the wider NIS learning community to access key documentation related to language learning;
- provide opportunities for English language learning for the wider NIS learning community.

*Students will:*

- understand and support the NIS language philosophy;
- take an active role in language learning and their language choices;
- make use of NIS teachers and resources, seeking help when it is needed;
- be provided opportunities to learn our host language, Mandarin, and engage in the Chinese culture;
- be provided opportunities to use multilingualism as a resource for learning.

*Teachers will:*

- understand and support the NIS language philosophy, as well as the Language Practices and Procedures at NIS;
- be intentional about the ways they promote language learning;
- explicitly teach the language conventions and usages of their subject;
- model effective communication;
- consider students' individual language profiles and learning needs when planning lessons;
- differentiate instruction and assessment suitable to students' language levels and proficiency;
- use appropriate resources to support students in their language learning;
- engage in professional development opportunities to support all language learners;
- use NIS curricular documentation to inform language learning, instruction and practices in the classroom.

*Parents will:*

- understand and support the NIS language philosophy;
- collaborate with the school and its faculty to encourage, provide and support opportunities for their child's language learning (both home language(s) and additional languages).

## **Language Learning at NIS**

### *Programmes of learning*

NIS was founded in 1992 and we are proud to be the first three-programme International Baccalaureate school in China, PreK to Grade 12, and the only IB World School in Nanjing.

### *Languages of instruction*

English is the primary language of inclusion and instruction in the NIS learning community.

We support students' use of home language(s) during play and unstructured time, and in the classroom setting as appropriate to context and task. In conjunction with their students, teachers are encouraged to create language goals and essential agreements for language use in and outside the classroom.

The languages taught at NIS are:

- Primary School: English and Mandarin
- Middle School: English, French, German, Korean, Mandarin and Spanish
- Upper School: English, French, German, Korean, Mandarin and Spanish

### *Home Languages*

In the promotion of international mindedness and in alignment with the IB philosophy, the maintenance of students' home language(s) is valued and encouraged at NIS. The school maintains a home language library collection, which is budgeted (per student head) for each of its language communities and supports home language literacy.

### *Language A Provision*

The AERO standards are used across the school to inform language teaching and learning. The approach to language learning in the Early Years (PreK – K2) centers around symbolic exploration and expression, through play, relationships and the learning environment. Grades 1 – 5 students have explicit language instruction in the areas of Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening. From PreK to Grade 5, homeroom instruction is in English. Both teachers and teaching assistants use a variety of resources and strategies to support our Primary School learners in accessing the curriculum. Students' home language may be used at teachers' discretion to support learning. German A classes are offered to Primary School students as an

After-School-Activity (ASA), whilst Korean A and Japanese A classes are run on campus each Saturday morning by external providers.

In the Middle Years Programme (Grades 6 – 10), Language & Literature A lessons are offered in English, German, Korean and Mandarin. Students not enrolled in English A are strongly encouraged to study a home language when it is offered by the school. Some students choose to study two Language As. All language classes in Grades 6 – 10 follow the MYP framework.

In the Upper School, Language & Literature A (Group 1) subjects of English, German, Korean and Mandarin are taught within the IB Diploma Programme at both Higher and Standard Levels. These languages are also offered as courses for the NIS High School Diploma. Students following either path to graduation are usually taught in the same class. If there is a demand for other home languages which are not offered by the school, NIS will strive to provide classrooms, resources and administration for the Diploma School Supported Self-Taught Languages A.

### *Language Development (Additional Languages)*

In the Primary School, students are either exposed to Mandarin language and culture (Early Years PreK - K2) or it is explicitly taught (Grades 1 – 5). Students are divided into various phases, based on proficiency level. This allows for a more differentiated approach to Mandarin language instruction. Phase 5/6 is dedicated to supporting our fluent Mandarin language learners. Students are given an assessment at either the end of each year or throughout the year to determine eligibility to move between the phases.

In almost all instances in the Middle Years Programme (Grades 6 – 10), students study an additional language of their choice. Students above an intermediate level of English proficiency can choose between the additional languages of French, Mandarin or Spanish (if the timetable allows), or the home languages of German, Korean or Mandarin. Phases are used in the Middle Years Programme to distinguish student proficiency levels within the language acquisition classes. Two phases may be combined in any one language acquisition class.

In the Upper School's Diploma Programme, Language Acquisition (Group 2) classes are offered in English, French, Mandarin and Spanish at both Higher and Standard levels. Mandarin is also offered at *Ab Initio* (Standard) level. Online courses (Pamoja Education) in French *Ab Initio* (Standard) level and Spanish *Ab Initio* (Standard) level are available to those students for whom online learning platforms are appropriate.

For non-Diploma Upper School students, the school offers NIS Mandarin language courses. These courses are age-level appropriate, building upon skills learned in the Middle Years Programme.

### *English Language Support*

ELL support is offered from Grades 1 – 5 to those students for whom it is deemed appropriate. In the Primary School, a WIDA assessment is administered to all English language learners annually as one measure of their English language development. WIDA proficiently levels, along with WIDA 'Can Do' statements, are used to inform the types of scaffolds and supports utilized to connect student learning and expressions of their understandings.

In some cases, students in Grades 6 - 10 that have not yet achieved an intermediate level of proficiency in English are enrolled in English for Academic Purposes (EAP). This is a scheduled class in lieu of learning a new, additional language. In Grades 6 – 10, students at the Phase 1 - 4 level in English also take EAP instead of a third language.

### **Language Profile**

The majority of NIS students speak English as a second language with a range of proficiency.

At the point of admission, students and their families stipulate the home language(s) and any other languages spoken.

NIS draws students from all over the globe. The student body is predominately derived from Asia, Australasia, Europe and North America.

### **Admissions**

Students are admitted to NIS into the Primary and lower Middle School irrespective of their level of English proficiency. In Grades 9 – 12, sufficient competency in English is required for admission. Students must demonstrate proficiency in English, commensurate with the grade level to which they are applying.

During the enrolment process, all second language English speaking applicants, with the exception of Early Years, are assessed to determine their English language proficiency levels in the four skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. An internationally recognised proficiency screener assesses applicants' English language competence. The results may inform class placement and any support the applicant could require to access the academic programs offered at the school.

### **Development of this document**

The Language Practices and Procedures at NIS is a working document updated in April 2019. It was reviewed and refined in conjunction with stakeholders within the NIS learning community.

### **References**

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