

Bilingual Education - A new option for CDNIS families

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Since 1991, the Canadian International School of Hong Kong (CDNIS) has drawn on the strength of its Canadian and Chinese foundations to create a unique learning environment for children from Early Years 1 (pre-kindergarten) to Grade 12 on one campus.

From August 2022, CDNIS will introduce a bilingual option in the Early Years Programme (EY1–EY2, 3–5 years old) consisting of 50% English and 50% Chinese content, which will expand to cover the entire Primary programme over the next several years. All families, new and current, will have the choice to join either our international or bilingual track.

The school's decision to introduce its bilingual programme at this time is based on both survey data from our existing clientele, as well as an increased demand from prospective families seeking a bilingual programme for their children. The school recognizes that English and Mandarin are the two most widely spoken languages in the world and that there are numerous cognitive benefits to learning an additional language. Therefore, CDNIS has decided to build on its existing and robust Chinese Language programme through the addition of the bilingual option as further preparation of our youngest learners to be citizens of a globally connected world.

Local or international families will now have the opportunity to decide which language track is best for their family situation and educational goals for their child. Everyone, no matter their language background or experience, is welcome in our bilingual programme for the first three years, Early Years 1 to Preparatory. From Grade 1, a Chinese language proficiency requirement will be part of the admissions process to ensure that the academic standards are maintained and not hindered by a lack of foundational knowledge in one of the two target languages.

Of course, some families may wish to maintain English as their focus while continuing to develop their Chinese language. These families will be able to continue to select and benefit from our well-established international track. Students will also have the opportunity to move from one track to another if their educational goals change and they meet the language requirements (only if transferring to the bilingual programme).

What will the bilingual option look like?

Starting in August 2022, our bilingual programme will begin with our youngest learners (EY1 and EY2, 3–5-year-olds) and progressively extend to the other grades in the Lower School.

Academic Year	Bilingual Option Implemented
2022-23	EY1 and EY2
2023-24	EY1 to Prep
2024-25	EY1 to Grade 1
2025-26	EY1 to Grade 2
2026-27	EY1 to Grade 3
2027-28	EY1 to Grade 4
2028-29	EY1 to Grade 5

We have decided to introduce a dual language immersion model. This is where students are immersed in one of the target languages throughout an entire day. English and Chinese will be taught both as a discipline as well as a medium in which disciplinary instruction is delivered. Students will therefore experience all their core subjects in both languages while having distinct language outcomes for both English and Chinese.

Bilingual education is an umbrella term that refers to any programme with instruction in two languages. Dual language education is a specific approach to developing language proficiency and literacy in one

native language and one foreign language. In the case of CDNIS, it will combine both Chinese and English native speakers in one classroom where academic content will be taught in both languages. Students maintain their native language while adding another language, and they develop pride in their own culture while developing an understanding of others.

Teachers and Educational Assistants in the bilingual programme at CDNIS are proficient to a native level in either English or Mandarin Chinese. Conceptual understanding and skills are developed through both languages while differentiating for the proficiency level of each child. The English-speaking or the Chinese-speaking homeroom teacher will teach the class for an entire day in one of the two target languages. Both teachers will collaboratively plan the lessons for the week to ensure correct alignment and progression of all curricular expectations.

The curriculum for both the international and bilingual programme will be identical except for the additional Chinese Language objectives in the bilingual programme. Both tracks will be delivered using the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme framework, offering students learning experiences supported by the latest research on pedagogical practices. The curriculum expectations in the Early Years are a blend of Ontario's Early Years and Hong Kong Kindergarten outcomes. Prep to Grade 5 expectations are drawn from the Ontario Standards for all subjects except Chinese which is based on Hong Kong, Mainland and Taiwan Chinese subject standards.

Who can apply?

The bilingual programme is for:

- Current CDNIS families who are seeking an equal focus on English and Chinese language and culture
- Local or international families looking for an international curriculum and want their children to learn in two languages
- Chinese-speaking families who want greater exposure to English, without losing their Chinese as an academic language

Adding this bilingual option will help us ensure we find the right pathway to fit each individual student's learning style and educational goals so that they may be successful in their educational journey. CDNIS is excited to continue to expand our options for our community as we continue to strive to inspire excellence, cultivate character, and empower engagement locally and globally.

You can find information about our Bilingual Programme and our school at <https://cdnis.edu.hk/>.

