

# RISS LANGUAGE POLICY

ROTTERDAM INTERNATIONAL SECONDARY SCHOOL

***“A language policy is an action statement...it is concerned less with where the students in a school are going, and more with how they are going to get there.”*** *Language: Policy in Schools, Corson (1999).*

Revised and approved April 2022  
Next revision: April 2024

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## **Policy – Sources of Information**

This policy has been informed by the following official documents:

- "Academic Integrity in the IB Educational Context". IBO, 2014, 2016
- "Handbook of procedures of the Diploma Programme 2017", IBO, 2016, 2017 d.
- "Diploma Programme Assessment Procedures", IBO, 2018, 2019
- "IB Assessment Principles and Practices", IBO, 2014, 2019
- IBO's Mission statement and Philosophy.
- IB Learner profile and RISS IB Learner Profile Plus
- RISS Vision, Mission and Values
- RISS Teaching and Learning Policy
- Learning a [Language](#) in the IB, IBO, 2020
- RISS Privacy Policy
- RISS Data Protection Policy

The current policy is associated with the RISS Admissions Policy, the RISS Assessment Policy, the RISS Language Policy, RISS Learning Diversity Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Wolfert Student Charter, Council of International Schools (CIS) and The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC).

## **RISS Mission, Vision and core values:**

Educating for self-awareness, curiosity, and integrity in a changing world is our mission and our vision is for every student to enjoy their youth.

RISS Language Policy is central to the identity of the school. It drives the school forward and the development of the students’ heritage language(s) and English Additional Language learning is essential to RISS. The school curriculum develops students’ ability to read, write, listen, and speak (both production and reproduction) for a wide range of purposes by using language to learn, critically think, explore, conceptualize, and organize. All teachers have an important role to play in the development of the language of instruction (English as the learning language at RISS) which will enable students to move towards a key goal of RISS, which is an understanding of the importance of language, the culture (s) associated with it and its role in learning.

### ***Internationalism and multilingualism:***

In today’s world of globalization and cultural openness, multilingualism is at the forefront as an important aspect of student learning. It is the act of learning, using, and promoting multiple languages by individuals and their communities. This is aligned with the RISS definition of internationalism and interculturalism which can be found in the school’s handbook.

## **Aims**

***“Learning another language is not only learning different words for the same things but learning another way to think about things.” Flora Lewis***

The aims of this policy document are to:

- Support students’ learning in all subjects taught in English, new languages and heritage languages by supporting teachers in the ways their work with students contributes to the development of students’ communication skills.
- Develop a shared understanding amongst staff of the role of language in students’ learning and how work in different subjects can contribute to, and benefit from, the development of students’ ability to communicate effectively in their heritage language and the language of instruction in the school, i.e., English.
- Encouraging multilingualism is imperative. The RISS recognizes it must meet the diversity of language needs of our students in terms of developing their heritage languages while concomitantly encouraging the acquisition of other languages (and particularly the learning language of the school, English) to prepare our students for a diverse and globalized world.
- Raise students’ own expectations of their achievements.

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- Develop students’ confidence in using English and subsequently their self-expression and communication in a language other than their heritage language.
- Promote knowledge and understanding of our students’ speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills, and identify areas of strengths and weaknesses in English, the heritage language, and any other new languages the student is developing. Implicit in this, is the knowledge and understanding of the diverse cultures using these languages, thus reinforcing our students’ understanding of cultural diversity in an international context.

**Principles of Language and Learning: “One language sets you in a corridor for life. Two languages open every door along the way.” Frank Smith**

## **BICS and CALPS**

RISS incorporates the principles of BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) and CALPS (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) as a platform for providing language support. Equally important is the incorporation of the International Baccalaureate’s Approaches to Teaching and Learning (ATL) as a means of delivering the support to all language students.

Here are six key pedagogical principles that underpin all IB programmes. Teaching in IB programmes is:

1. based on **inquiry**
2. focused on **conceptual understanding**
3. developed in local and global **contexts**
4. focused on effective teamwork and **collaboration**
5. **differentiated** to meet the needs of all learners
6. informed by **assessment** (formative and summative)

In terms of language policy at the RISS, these pedagogical principles are aligned with BICS and CALP, to provide the connections, consistency, and implementation tools to implement language learning across all RISS programs. These are applied with the learning goals of the IBO’s ATL for both teachers and students.

**The alignment of the IBO Approaches to teaching and learning (ATL) with BICS and CALP at the RISS:**

ATL	Description	BICS applied	CALP applied
Thinking skills	developing student metacognition, reflection, and critical thinking skills		X
Communication skills	<p>ability to communicate in written and oral comprehension (both productive and reproductive).</p> <p>ability to listen to, understand various spoken messages in a variety of circumstances and to speak concisely and clearly.</p> <p>the ability to read and understand different texts, adopting strategies to access various reading and writing purposes.</p> <p>ability to write different types of texts for various purposes enhancing expression of concepts and critical thinking.</p> <p>ability to formulate arguments (reproductive and productive) and be able to process other viewpoints whether orally or written.</p> <p>ability to use technology ethically.</p>	<p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p>	<p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p>

Social Skills	<p>A fundamentally active social process with a focus on collaboration as a crucial way of constructing understanding meaning.</p> <p>To promote appreciation and respect of individual differences, cultural and language diversity</p>	<p>X</p> <p>X</p>	<p>X</p> <p>X</p>
Self-management skills	<p>Organization skills, managing time and tasks, goal setting.</p> <p>Affective skills in terms of managing motivation, resilience, mindfulness.</p> <p>This will enable students to gain some control over their motivation and ability to deal effectively with setbacks and difficulties which are prevalent with language acquisition.</p>	<p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p>	<p>X</p> <p>X</p>
Research skills	<p>To encourage students to become responsible for their own learning and involved in the planning and evaluation of their instruction.</p> <p>Use their life experiences as resources for learning; focus on problem centered rather than content-oriented research.</p> <p>Understand the importance of their learning.</p>		<p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p>

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## Consistency of Implementation Across the RISS Curricula:

It is important all students have consistency of access with support of their English Language learning across the curricula. The following are consistently implemented across the curricula at RISS:

Access to	Foundation Course	IGCSE (Middle Years)	IB DP/CP
Assessment for Gap analysis (Off 2 class)	X	X	X
EAL support	X	X	X
Differentiation of individual language skills	X	X	X
Benchmarking and tracking of language skills acquisition	X	X	X
Continuous assessment of language skills acquisition	X	X	X
Extra time for exams regarding language skills	X	IGCSE examination procedures in place	IB examination procedures in place
Use of dictionaries during exams except for language exams	X	X	X
All classroom teachers trained in “Optimus Training” program to support language learning in the classroom	X	X	X
Access to heritage language development where viable within subjects offered in the programs	X	X	X

## Curriculum Implementation:

*“That is what learning is like. You suddenly understand something you’ve understood all your life, but in a different way.” Doris Lessing*

### **Language of instruction:**

At the RISS the learning language of all lessons (except for modern language acquisition and development) is English. Subsequently, support for English language acquisition is pivotal to the success of students in the school. The school offers a strong and consistent program from Grades 6 -12 for those students identified as requiring support in their language acquisition of English.



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The RISS perspective is that all teachers are to some degree language teachers, and it is inherent within our Professional Development Program that all teachers be formally trained to support EAL learners in the classroom.

### ***Host Country Language:***

RISS considers it paramount for students at RISS to be able to navigate and benefit from the cultural heritage of the Netherlands. To this end, students in the Foundation Course (FC) study Dutch either as a heritage or acquisition language. The International General Certificate for Secondary Education (IGCSE) has, in the past, had students also study Dutch. However, IGCSE no longer offers Dutch as a modern language and the RISS has its own Dutch curriculum with modes of certification for its students for Dutch at an acquisition level. The “Language One” curriculum is used for our Dutch heritage language students.

- Dutch: the language of the host country is offered for native speakers in each grade from 6-12.
- Dutch is offered for non-native speakers, in Grades 6-12, with varying proficiency levels.
- Dutch is taught at both a B language HL/SL level, ab initio level, as well as Dutch A Language and Literature HL/SL in the IBDP.

### ***Heritage and modern languages acquisition:***

*“A different language is a different vision of life.” Federico Fellini*

Students are encouraged to not only continue with their heritage language(s) but to also acquire further modern languages while at the RISS. This is in keeping with RISS’ vision of internationalism and multilingualism.

There is a robust offering of modern languages as well as school supported self-taught language programs at both the IGCSE and IBDP.

### **Admissions:**

Where deemed necessary by Admissions, students will be given the Gap analysis assessment through “Off 2 Class” which is in line with the CEFR for evaluation of the student strengths and weaknesses in English language acquisition. The Gap analysis identifies where the student needs support. Once in the program, the student is assessed twice a year by Gap Analysis (Off 2 Class) which provides progress data and maintains a profile of each individual student.

### ***Student Profiles:***

Once students have been assessed in terms of their English language skills, a profile is computer generated through their bi-annual assessments using Gap Analysis (Off 2 Class). These assessments are individually generated and assist their EAL teachers in identifying areas of strengths and weaknesses and support both student and teacher in the differentiated needs of each student in the program. The EAL team meets after each assessment to discuss progress and areas where they can continue or raise the challenge of

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their language acquisition in English. The Gap analysis assessment thus becomes a benchmark for each individual student and tracks their progress while in the program.

## English Additional Language Support & Modern Language Learning in the Foundation Years:

*“To learn another language is to possess a second soul.” Charlemagne*

As stated at point of admissions, individual students are assessed on their English language skills based on their past experiences and discussion with the student, parents, Head of Sections, and the Curriculum Leader. Students who are deemed requiring support are given the Gap Analysis assessment to determine their strength, weaknesses and level of support required.

At the FC, the EAL program is determined as follows:

Grade	Beginners	Intermediate	Upper Intermediate	English as a first language	Number of lessons per week
Grade 6	x	x	x	The exception is English beginners	Beginners receive 4 lessons per week. All other levels receive 2 lessons per week.
Grade 7	x	x	x	The exception is English beginners	Beginners receive 4 lessons per week. All other levels receive 2 lessons per week.
Grade 8	x	x	x	The exception is English beginners	Beginners receive 4 lessons per week. All other levels receive 2 lessons per week.

Since Beginners EAL students do not take English first language, the lessons are timetabled to run adjacent to other FC students studying English first language.

In March of Grade 8, all EAL learners are assessed again with the gap analysis (Off 2 class) to help support English language choices for the IGCSE.

Modern Languages Learning in the FC for students **not taking EAL:**

Grade	French	Spanish	German	Chinese	Number of lessons per week
6	x	x	x	x	2
7	x	x	x	x	2
8	x	x	x	x	2

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Students taking English First Language May choose two of the above languages in addition to Dutch languages offered.

#### Modern Languages Learning in the FC for students **taking EAL**

Grade	French	Spanish	German	Chinese	Number of lessons per week
6	x	x	x	x	2
7	x	x	x	x	2
8	x	x	x	x	2

Beginning of the school year 2020/2021, all grade 6 students, whether they are EAL or non EAL students, may choose two of the above languages in addition to Dutch. Individual cases will be assessed by the Head of Foundation and the Curriculum Leader for Languages. Grade 7 and 8 EAL Upper Intermediate students in the FC may choose one of these languages in addition to Dutch.

Grade 7 and 8 EAL Beginners who have one of these languages as a heritage language will select it as their chosen language.

If a grade 7 and/or 8 Beginner EAL student does not have one of the listed heritage languages above, they will take EAL lessons when these languages are being taught on the timetable.

#### Dutch Lessons in the FC:

Grade	Dutch Beginner	Foreign	Dutch Intermediate	Foreign	Dutch Advanced	Foreign	Number of Lessons per week
6	x		x		x		2
7	x		x		x		2
8	x		x		x		2

All FC students will take Dutch based on evaluation of their experiences and assessment results. All students who are deemed Dutch First also have 2 lessons per week in Foundation.

Please note Grade 7 and 8 Beginner EAL students will not take Dutch while in the Beginner program. Once the student has left the Beginner program, they may take additional languages as above.

In Grade 8, all students studying Dutch, French, Spanish and Chinese will sit CEFR accredited examinations in the proficiency of these languages.

#### **On-going EAL Assessment:**

As has been already indicated, students in the FC/ EAL program are assessed twice a year where their strengths and weaknesses are identified to support differentiation for individual

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students as well as building a database on everyone to monitor their progress within the program. This is also a means for determining the level of English the student should opt for in the IGCSE.

### **English Additional Language Support & Modern Language Learning in the IGCSE (Middle Years):**

*“You can never understand one language until you understand at least two.” Geoffrey Williams*

Consistently throughout the school, the official language of learning is English except for the modern language subjects. To accommodate differentiation of learning and experiences of learning in the English language, the IGCSE program offers different approaches to English acquisition.

As has been stated, students of ESL/EAL and modern languages are formally assessed using external frameworks in Grade 8 to determine the levels of study in the IGCSE. For new admissions, the determination of ESL/EAL is based on CEFR assessments. For modern languages, admission is determined by previous experience and interviews. Cambridge International recommends that learners starting an IGCSE foreign language course should have studied the language during lower secondary schooling.

The following English Language courses are offered in the IGCSE (Middle Years):

Grade	First Language English	Number of lessons per week	World Literature	Number of lessons per week	IGCSE English Second Language	Number of lessons per week	RISS EAL	Number of lessons per week
9	x	3	x	3	x	3	x	2
10	x	3	x	3	x	3	x	2

Which specific language levels to be taken is on a case-by-case basis for each student. This will involve life experiences, assessments, and interviews.

The following Modern Languages are offered in the IGCSE (Middle Years):

Grade	French	Spanish	German	Chinese	Number of lessons per week	Private mother-tongue language study	Number of lessons per year
9	x	x	x	x	3	x	130 recommended
10	x	x	x	x		x	

### **Dutch Language Lessons in the Middle Years:**

Dutch language study is compulsory in Grade 9 and 10, following a school-based curriculum and external assessments. Students receive three periods of Dutch each week, at beginners, intermediate, advance or first level.

## **Languages in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program IBDP at RISS:**

*"If we spoke a different language, we would perceive a somewhat different world." Ludwig Wittgenstein.*

The IBDP offers a substantial number of options for the Group 1 and Group 2 language selections which fulfill the requirements of the IB diploma program while concomitantly reinforcing RISS' mission and vision of internationalism and multilingualism. Front and center is the continued support of the acquisition of the learning language of the school, English, while continuing to develop the individual student's heritage language(s) and offer them the opportunity to acquire more languages to further establish their multilingualism.

### **Students transitioning from IGCSE into IB English A or English B**

Students taking ESL in IGCSE who want to take English A HL in the IB, must pass their IGCSE exams with an A or higher. Students taking ESL in IGCSE who want to take English A SL, must pass their IGCSE exams with a B or higher. Students taking ESL in IGCSE who pass their IGCSE exams with a C must take English B. Students who took English as an A language in IGCSE, must take English as an A language in IB.

### **English Language Learning: Group 1**

At the heart of the language policy in the IBDP is the recognition for differentiation of language skills, while concomitantly challenging the students to acquire the necessary vocabulary, grammar, syntax and writing skills demanded in the IBDP in terms of critical thinking and reflection. To that end, RISS offers the following English language courses:

Subject	Level	Number of hours per week
English Literature	HL	5
English Literature	SL	3
English Language & Literature	HL	5
English Language & Literature	SL	3

### **English Language Acquisition: Group 2**

Since English is the learning of the school, it is imperative we support our students who have learned in another language prior to their admission to RISS. The School offers English B HL as a way to support continued language acquisition in terms of vocabulary, grammar, syntax, oral and writing skills, and literature.

Subject	Level	Number of hours per week
English	HL	5

### **Preparatory year:**

The IBDP is a rigorous program where all subjects are taught in English with the exception of modern languages. RISS recognizes that this is problematic for students who have learned their heritage language and now find themselves in a new country for a myriad of reasons.

Our perspective is that these students need to be supported in their new language while recognizing that they bring a plethora of experiences to our school which are beneficial to the school community. Through interviews, assessments and discussions of the student’s experiences, it may be recommended that a student do a “preparatory year” to focus on honing their English language skills.

During this time the student will study their subject choices at SL to support the specific language and terminology required for their studies as well as studying English B. It is expected that they will work diligently on their language acquisition and strive to rise to the challenges of the overall program, The students will be monitored and the EAL program adjusted to their individual needs through the gap analysis of the “Off 2 class” which is assessed twice during the school year.

### **Modern Languages in the IBDP:**

At RISS, the fundamental mission and vision of our students being multilingual is reflected in the innumerable combination of heritage languages and acquisition languages on offer.

### **Modern Languages offered at RISS for the IBDP:**

RISS offers an extensive number of modern languages for our students to study at both the Group 1 and Group 2 level:

Language	Level	Number of hours per week
<b>Group 1</b>		
SSST own language	SL only	3
Dutch Language and Literature	HL	5
<b>Group 2</b>		
Dutch Language and Literature	SL	3
Chinese B ab initio	SL only	3
Dutch B	HL	5
Dutch B	SL	3
French B	HL	5
French B	SL	3
French B ab initio	SL only	3
Spanish B	HL	5
Spanish B	SL	3
Spanish B ab initio	SL only	3

### **Dutch Language: Heritage and acquisition languages:**

While Dutch is not compulsory at the IBDP, students who have Dutch are offered the possibility to further develop their language skills through Group1 Dutch Language and Literature at both the HL and SL levels. Students who have taken Dutch First in the middle years, can only opt for Dutch A SL or HL in the IB, not Dutch B.

Dutch B at Both HL and SL are offered for students acquiring the language skills for Dutch. Additionally, Dutch B ab initio has now been approved by the IBO to allow new students to the Netherlands to learn Dutch as part of their IB subject package:

Subject	Level	Number of hours per week
Group 1 Dutch Language and Literature	HL	5
Group 1 Dutch Language and Literature	SL	3
Group 2 Dutch B	HL	5
Group 2 Dutch B	SL	3
Group 2 Dutch ab initio	SL only	3

### **Ab Initio Languages:**

Ab initio languages are offered to students who have had little to no exposure in the target language. For example, if a student wants to learn French and has never had it in Foundation Years or Middle Years, they are allowed to take French Ab Initio. However, if a student has had French as a subject in the past, they can only take French as a B language. This applies to all languages offered at Ab Initio and Language B levels at RISS.

### **Modern Languages at the IBDP:**

RISS takes pride in the options available for IBDP students to continue their heritage language development and/or acquire new languages. There are numerous pathways by which this can be achieved:

**Group 1: School supported self-taught Lit A:** *“If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart.” Nelson Mandela*

For over fifteen years RISS has been running the school supported self-taught Literature A SL (only allowed by the IBO) to encourage students to continue the development of their heritage language(s) as part of their IBDP. This is quintessential to RISS’ mission and vision of internationalism and multilingualism by preparing our students for the globalization of the twenty-first century.

Students taking this subject have been very successful in the IBDP and reinforces the importance of one’s heritage language(s). Here is an example of the languages taught over the past five years in own language literature for Group1:

Albanian	Lithuanian
Arabic	Nepalese
Bosnian	Norwegian
Chinese	Persian

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Croatian	Portuguese
Dutch	Polish
Finnish	Romanian
French	Russian
German	Spanish
Hungarian	Serbian
Icelandic	Swedish
Japanese	Thai
Korean	Turkish

Additionally, we have had students study Group 1 Japanese Lit A HL with an outside tutor who works closely with the IBDP Coordinator to ensure the integrity and ethics of the program implemented.

To continue with the SSST program, RISS is building up a roster of its own language tutors to support the SSST teachers in the classroom with vocabulary, grammar, syntax, and literary analysis.

### ***Languages in the International Baccalaureate Career-Related Program IB CP at RISS:***

For the 2022/23 school year, RISS will be welcoming students into the IBCP programme as part of a more comprehensive IB programme. All students will be required to take two IBDP language subjects.

#### **Language subjects offered in IB CP**

- Studies in Language and Literature: English Literature OR English Language and Literature SL/HL
- A Language Ab initio.

Furthermore, IB CP students are required by the IB to complete a Language Development element with students required to undertake 50hr of learning across the two years of study (11/12). The Language Development requirement will be fulfilled by having students undertake a Language B or Ab initio course.

As part of the language development course IBCP students are required to maintain and complete a language portfolio to document their learning activities and provide evidence of language engagement and development.

#### **The SSST Endowment Award:**

In 2019, RISS established the RISS SSST Endowment Award for the outstanding student in their heritage language. The first recipient received the award for attaining a 7 (the highest possible grade in the IBDP) for Nepalese.

#### **Pamoja:**

To allow access to languages that are not specifically for literature, RISS uses Pamoja, an online service (accredited by the IBO) where students are scheduled three hours a week to pursue language acquisition online. Currently we have students pursuing Spanish ab initio



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due to scheduling conflicts. The use of Pamoja ensures students can follow language acquisition where it is not possible within the RISS IBDP schedule.

## **Professional Development for Teaching Staff in Language Acquisition and Development:**

*“With languages you are at home anywhere.” Edmund de Waal*

At RISS, it is expected that all teaching staff have the following training:

1. Optimus training in ESL in the Mainstream.
2. Guided Inquiry
3. Accredited language specific training for their area of the curriculum
4. Use of consistent pedagogical methodologies and terminology which link to the IBO's ATL and RISS' literacy program using BICS/CALP
5. Differentiation in language teaching and learning
6. Pastoral/learning support to implement language learning in the school.

## **Survey - January 2022**

*“Data really powers everything that we do.” — Jeff Weiner*

In January 2022, a survey was sent to RISS students and their parents asking them a variety of language related questions as they pertain to students. Approximately 40 languages are spoken by our students and parents at home. However, while a high percentage of both students and parents felt they either highly agreed or agreed that students spoke their Heritage language fluently (Students: 49% highly agreed, 32.6% agreed - Parents: 52.5% highly agreed, 28.3% agreed), both groups percentages fell when talking about their confidence in the students writing abilities in their Heritage language (Students: 39% strongly agreed, 30.6% agreed - Parents: 33.3% strongly agreed, 33.3% agreed). Parents were especially interested in having their children in the Foundation be able to follow their heritage language as a self-taught language (32.3% strongly agree, 22.2% agree and 32.3% somewhat agree). These figures tell us that we need to provide more Heritage Language support so that our students maintain their heritage languages while learning in English. Hence, we will begin to research this possibility for implementation in the school year 2023/2024.

We also asked “How important is it for you to learn a language”. Of the parents surveyed, 73.7% answered that it was extremely important and another 20.2% said it was important. On the other hand, only 22.6% of the students found it extremely important, while 37.7% found it important and 31.6% found it somewhat important. This data shows us that at RISS we need to provide opportunities for our students to learn additional languages. Students and Parents both felt that Spanish, French, Dutch, German and Chinese (in that order) were important languages to learn as additional languages. Taking all these figures into

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consideration, one can see why RISS has implemented a wide range of language choices for their students to choose from.