

## **Ermitage IB School: Languages Policy**

### **Our Mission, Vision and Values**

*Embracing Individuality, Learning Together:* From our green setting of Maisons-Laffitte, Paris our IB Programmes offer meaningful and engaging learning experiences which inspire students every day to thrive and reach their potential, preparing them to succeed and make a difference as responsible global citizens.

Our key values are:

- Wellbeing
- Connection & Community
- Inquiry & Innovation
- Intercultural Understanding
- Global Engagement

### **Policy Communication, Development, and Review Process**

This policy is shared openly with all members of the school community.

It was developed collaboratively by the Language Working Group members and reviewed by the school's Senior Leadership Team.

Last review: October 2024

Next review: September 2027

To be reviewed by: Ermitage SLT, HOD English, HOD Languages

### **The Purpose of the Language Policy**

At Ermitage IB School, we acknowledge that language is central to learning and that 'all teachers are also language teachers', responsible for supporting the acquisition of language and skills in their classes. Effective written and spoken English communication skills are crucial to student success in our IB programs. Ermitage IB School is committed to developing and perfecting the English language needs of our students.

### **Language Philosophy and Principles**

As an IB World School, we recognise that the students who join our international community come from different linguistic, cultural and educational backgrounds. The school recognises that it is essential that we foster respect for these differences in our approaches to language and learning and that we embrace inclusion and diversity in our school community.

Our objective for language learning at Ermitage IB School is to enable every learner to learn languages, learn about language, and learn through language, supporting plurilingualism as fundamental to increasing intercultural understanding and international-mindedness.

We recognise the transfer of cognitive skills from the stronger language to English. Teachers differentiate instruction to accommodate student needs in the MYP years, enabling students



to acquire the oral and written expressive language skills necessary to succeed in the IB Diploma Program.

By ensuring that all our learners develop English, French, and other languages, we provide access to a language-rich education for students from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. At Ermitage IB School, students will learn at least one language in addition to their mother tongue or strongest language.

At Ermitage, we recognise that administrators, teachers, librarians and other school staff will require ongoing professional development in the fields of language learning and teaching. Each year we offer staff training sessions to upskill our staff in these areas.

### **Working Language & Language of Instruction**

English is the language of instruction in IB programs. It is also the working language across the IB Programs, and all school-wide communication with parents, whether written or spoken, is conducted in English. As an international school in France dedicated to inclusion, we may occasionally communicate with French-speaking parents and students in French during meetings. Additionally, meetings with parents can be conducted with an interpreter for other languages when requested and feasible.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

In supporting inclusion, we recognise the challenges created by perceived parental, teacher or cultural expectations and attitudes towards inclusion and diverse learning needs. Each student, parent, teacher, and staff member is responsible for promoting a culture that fosters inclusion. As a home for students representing numerous nations and major cultural traditions, we recognise that our community brings together differing cultural perspectives, and we must nurture inclusive practices, attitudes, and behaviours.

All members of the school community are responsible for knowing all parts of this policy

### **Students are responsible for:**

- Engaging actively in the development of language skills, including their mother tongue, the language of instruction, and additional languages.
- Practising academic integrity in their language acquisition and use.
- Respecting linguistic diversity and valuing the different languages and cultures of their peers.
- Participating in language support programs if required, and taking ownership of their language learning process.
- Utilising the school's resources (e.g., libraries, online tools) to support language development across all subject areas.
- Applying language skills across different subjects and in interdisciplinary contexts.



**Parents are responsible for:**

- Supporting their child's language development at home, including promoting their mother tongue.
- Encouraging the use of the school's language of instruction and additional languages outside of the classroom.
- Communicating with the school about their child's language needs, progress, and any specific support that might be necessary.
- Encouraging reading, writing, and speaking in different languages, both at home and in community settings.
- Staying informed about the school's language policy and programs to support language learning effectively.

We recognise that all teachers are also language teachers, responsible for supporting the acquisition of language and skills in their classes. Therefore

**Teachers are responsible for:**

We recognise that all teachers are teachers of language.

- Implementing the school's language policy in all subject areas by incorporating language development into their teaching.
- Promoting an inclusive classroom environment that supports language learning and multilingualism.
- Differentiating instruction to meet the diverse language needs of students, including providing support for English as an additional language (EAL) and mother-tongue learners.
- Embedding opportunities for vocabulary acquisition, reading, writing, speaking, and listening in all subject activities.
- Collaborating with colleagues to ensure a consistent and coherent approach to language learning across the curriculum.
- Supporting students in understanding subject-specific language and terminology.
- Maintaining regular communication with parents regarding language development and progress.

**Heads of Department are responsible for:**

- Ensuring that the language policy is implemented consistently within their department.
- Overseeing curriculum development to incorporate language learning objectives and strategies in subject areas.
- Providing guidance and resources to teachers on best practices for language instruction.
- Monitoring and evaluating student language development within their subject area.



- Promoting interdisciplinary collaboration between language teachers and other subject teachers to reinforce language skills.
- Ensuring that language development is a key consideration in student assessments and reporting.

### **Coordinators are responsible for:**

- Overseeing the implementation of the language policy across their programmes and ensuring alignment with IB standards.
- Ensuring that the school's language policy is regularly reviewed and updated in collaboration with staff, students, and parents.
- Supporting teachers in integrating the school's language policy into their lesson plans and classroom practices.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of language support programs and adjusting them as needed to meet student needs.
- Liaising with parents, teachers, and external organisations to ensure students receive appropriate language support.
- Facilitating professional development on language acquisition and multilingual education for teachers.

### **The Head of School is responsible for:**

- Establishing and promoting a school-wide commitment to multilingualism and the language policy in alignment with the IB philosophy.
- Ensuring the language policy is clearly communicated to all stakeholders (students, parents, teachers, and staff).
- Overseeing the development and regular review of the school's language policy, ensuring it aligns with both the IB MYP and DP frameworks.
- Allocating sufficient resources (staffing, materials, training) to support effective language learning and instruction, including additional language and mother-tongue programs.
- Engaging with the wider community to promote the school's commitment to language learning and multilingualism.
- Ensuring that the school's admissions and recruitment processes consider the language needs and profiles of prospective students and staff.

### **Valuing the Host Country's language**

In addition to the English curriculum, Ermitage IB School recognises the importance of our host country's culture and language. As an International School in France, our MYP students



must take French language courses, either in Language Acquisition or Language and Literature.

- MYP students proficient in both languages may take both French and English as Language and Literature courses.
- In the MYP, French Language Acquisition level is differentiated from Phase One (lowest) to Phase Six (highest). We offer French Language & Literature for students who are proficient in French.
- Students may complete their Personal Project in French or English.
- DP students proficient in English and French can pursue a Bilingual Diploma.
- Students may complete their Extended Essay in French or English.
- Students develop their knowledge of the French language and culture through curriculum-linked field trips to museums and sites in Paris and the local area.
- Students can participate in service projects serving the local community and in sports competitions in local and regional French leagues.

### **Valuing students' Home Country Language**

We welcome students from many different linguistic backgrounds, including over 50 nationalities and over 30 languages spoken. We support students in maintaining and recognising their home country languages.

- DP students have the opportunity to follow a School-Supported Self-Taught programme to study Standard Level Literature in their home language.
- The school hosts its International Festival in October.
- All MYP Units of Inquiry are embedded in Global Contexts, giving students the opportunity to recognise and learn about their and others, home country languages.

Following a school-supported self-taught language programme is encouraged. We believe studying a home country's language can raise the students' self-confidence and self-awareness and encourage international-mindedness. Maintaining the home country's language is essential for individual identity and cognitive and cultural development.

Where requested by families, Ermitage will share contact details for language teachers (we are aware of) in home languages for tutoring out of school.

### **Valuing the School's Language of Instruction**

All lessons at Ermitage IB School are taught in English (with the exception of French and Spanish classes). We recognise that many of our students are not native English speakers and we offer a bespoke English Intensive programme, taught by specialist EAL teachers, to help students arriving with a beginner level of English; and additional English Enhancement for intermediate level of English. The aim of the courses is to support students in and through English so that they can achieve in all their subjects:



- EAL Intensive is for students in MYP123 who join us with a beginner level of English. These students receive additional support during some of their timetabled subjects to focus on English. The students in this course are taught in small groups and follow a bespoke curriculum to allow them to make rapid progress in the language and to get them fully integrated into the school.
- EAL Enhancement is for students with an intermediate level of English. These are English support classes during the school day that complement the students' studies.
- Our Admissions team and Coordinator will explore the feasibility for students with a low level of English to be able to enter MYP5 as we strive to ensure each student is placed where they can succeed the following year (in this case, in the Diploma Program).

As part of our MYP and DP admissions process, placement tests are given to ensure each student is placed appropriately. The language level of each language acquisition student is monitored to gauge their progress to be able to access our IB programs.

Students are closely monitored to ensure that they are making the required progress.

In addition to our EAL courses, all teachers at Ermitage IB School are given information about students in their classes for whom English is an additional language. They are given regular training and workshops to provide them with the tools to fully support all their students with their learning in and through English.

All students at Ermitage IB School are encouraged to borrow books from the library. There is a large range of books to suit all interests and we also have a selection of abridged books written specifically for EAL learners.

### **Distinguishing Language A, Language B, and Ab Initio**

In Ermitage IB School, students can study Language A and Language B in French and English. Each student is assessed on their verbal and written language skills, which is used to determine the most appropriate class for their success.

<b>What is Language A?</b>	<b>What is Language B?</b>	<b>What is Ab Initio?</b>
Language A is for the student with extensive experience with or proficiency in a language. These students can read, analyse, and respond to complex literary and nonliterary texts in a given language.	Language B is designed for students with experience in the target language, providing students with an appropriate degree of challenge to support their development.	Language Ab initio is designed for students with no prior experience of the target language or those with very limited previous exposure.  Language ab initio courses are language acquisition courses designed to allow



		students to develop in another language.
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### Language A in the MYP

Both English and French offer a Language A programme of study at MYP. As a subject group, MYP Language and Literature aims to enable students to:

- Use language as a vehicle for thought, creativity, reflection, learning, self-expression, analysis and social interaction
- Develop the skills involved in listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, and presenting in a variety of contexts
- Develop critical, creative and personal approaches to studying and analysing literary and non-literary texts
- Engage with texts from different historical periods and a variety of cultures
- Explore and analyse aspects of personal, host and other cultures through literary and non-literary texts
- Explore language through a variety of media and modes
- Develop a lifelong interest in reading
- Apply linguistic and literary concepts and skills in a variety of authentic contexts.

To be successful in the IB Diploma, each student currently in MYP4 must have a clear Language A pathway. The school is committed to supporting each student in this.

### Language A in the DP

Students enrolling in an IB Diploma must choose one Language A, at either the Standard or Higher Level. Language A courses at DP are offered in English and French. Where we have sufficient students, we can also offer Language A in Spanish. Students can study either Literature or Language and Literature.

Students who complete two Language A courses are automatically awarded a Bilingual Diploma by the IB. As a subject group, Studies in Language and Literature aims to enable students to:

- Engage with a range of texts, in a variety of media and forms, from different periods, styles, and cultures.
- Develop skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, presenting and performing.
- Develop skills in interpretation, analysis, and evaluation.
- Develop sensitivity to the formal and aesthetic qualities of texts and an appreciation of how they contribute to diverse responses and open up multiple meanings.



- Develop an understanding of relationships between texts and a variety of perspectives, cultural contexts, and local and global issues, and an appreciation of how they contribute to diverse responses and open up multiple meanings.
- Develop an understanding of the relationships between studies in language and literature and other disciplines.
- Communicate and collaborate in a confident and creative way
- Foster a lifelong interest in and enjoyment of language and literature.

### **Language B in the MYP**

In MYP Language Acquisition, students develop communication skills and gain proficiency. Lessons in Language Acquisition are offered in English, French, and Spanish. They are taught in phases to meet the range of students' language profiles and needs. Students with no prior knowledge of the language start in Phase One.

Placement in the correct phase is based on each student's language profile. This history of language learning is recorded by our admissions team at the time of each student's entry to Ermitage with information from both families and previous schools. Where appropriate this is also shared with our Diverse Learning team.

Transitions between phases are based on the classroom teacher's assessment of the student's ability and readiness. Students can attain a proficiency level that qualifies them to transition to the French or English Language and Literature course. Decisions on transitions between phases are made in consultation with the Head of Department, Subject Teacher, and the MYP Coordinator.

### **Language B in the DP**

Students enrolling in an IB Diploma may choose one Language B (or a second Language A with Coordinator approval). This Language B course can be at the Standard or Higher level or a Ab Initio (beginner or near beginner). Students can choose English, French, or Spanish for Language B. Mandarin is also a distance-taught option.

Students in Phase 4 (or below) at the end of MYP5 are encouraged to continue studying the same language as their Language B DP course. French and Spanish Ab Initio are only offered to students with little or no prior exposure to French or Spanish.

Additional Language B courses can be offered where there is sufficient student interest and teacher availability. An external provider, Pamoja, offers online language instruction in Mandarin Ab Initio at an additional cost.

In Language Acquisition courses, students develop communication and literacy skills in a language through the use of a variety of spoken, visual, and written texts. Goals common to both Language B and Language Ab Initio are:

- Communicate clearly and effectively in a range of contexts and for a variety of purposes.





- Understand and use language appropriate to a range of interpersonal and/or intercultural contexts and audiences.
- Understand and use language to express and respond to a range of ideas with fluency and accuracy.
- Identify, organise, and present ideas on a range of topics.
- Understand, analyse and reflect upon a range of written, audio, visual and audio-visual texts.



**References:**

This policy has been written with the support of the following resources:

International Baccalaureate Organization. DP languages courses overview placement guidance, August 2021

International Baccalaureate Organization. Language and Literature guide (for use from September 2014/January 2015, updated September 2017)

International Baccalaureate Organization. Diploma Programme Language A: Literature (first assessment 2021)

International Baccalaureate Organization. Diploma Programme Language A: Language and Literature (first assessment 2021)