Calgary French & International School

Language Policy

A. School Mission & Vision

Mission: Calgary French & International School develops each student's individual and academic potential through full French immersion, an international focus and the development of the whole student in a rich and dynamic learning environment.

Vision: Calgary French & International School graduates will be active global citizens with a foundation for lifelong success, and our school will be the leader in French immersion and international education.

B. Purpose of This Policy

At CFIS, we strive to develop strong communicators and open-minded multilingual learners. This Language Policy endeavors to support the development of these Learner Profile attributes by supporting the development of their English, French, and Spanish language skills, while celebrating and leveraging the richness of their home language.

C. Our Philosophy on Language Education

CFIS welcomes families and students from a wide range of cultures and backgrounds. What our families share is the value that they place on becoming bilingual (English and French, Canada's two official languages) as well as being multilingual learners. The majority of our families are not French speaking, yet they choose to enrol their children in a school where French, a minority language in Canada, is the language of instruction. At CFIS, we recognize that there is a deep relationship between language, identity, and culture.

Intercultural awareness and international mindedness are integral to our mission. As a UNESCO, Round Square, and IBO school, we view multilingualism as a fundamental right and we are committed to supporting our students in the development of three languages: French, English and Spanish, as well as recognizing and honouring each student's home language.

The faculty and staff at CFIS honour and celebrate diversity and work collaboratively to support and embrace home languages through a variety of opportunities in our classrooms and school, including:

- multicultural and multilingual books in school libraries
- curricular materials that honor diversity and a variety of cultural viewpoints

- support for English as an Additional Language Learners
- annual events to honour and celebrate the diversity of cultures and languages in our school and community
- interpreters available for parent/teacher meetings, as requested

We believe that the study of languages not only develops higher order cognitive thinking skills but also provides a powerful means by which one gains understanding of other cultures and that being able to speak a language indicates deep respect for that culture.

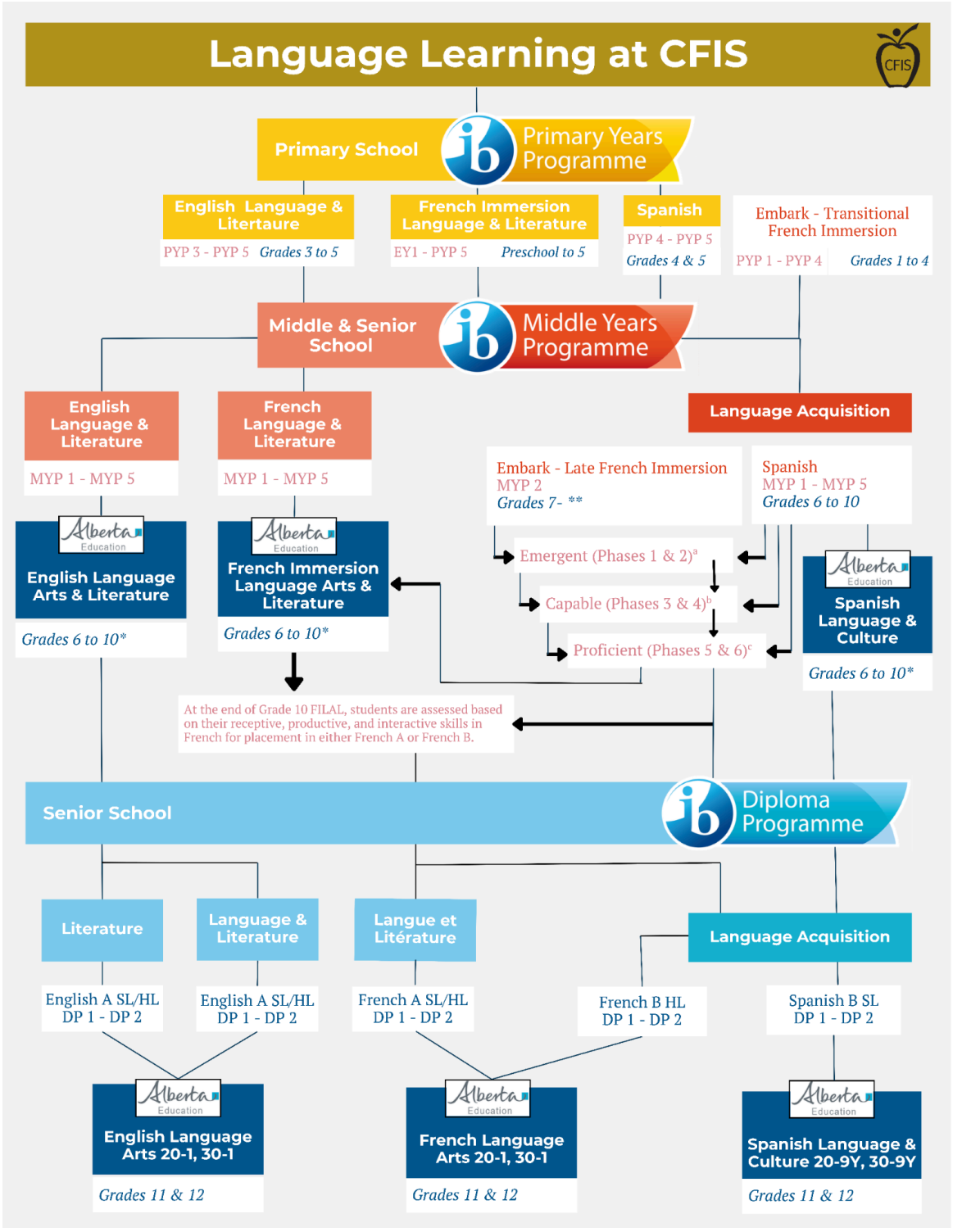
D. Our School Language Profile

At CFIS, we follow the Alberta Education mandated program of studies. The premise of a French immersion program in Alberta is that language and content are entwined. All teachers are language teachers. Students learn the French language, they learn about the French language and they learn through the French language (Alberta Education, 2014).

English is the primary language of communication with families. Parent-teacher interviews may be conducted in either French or English (or in Spanish with the Spanish teacher), depending on the language in which the parent is most comfortable and the fluency of the teacher.

French is the primary language of instruction, with some courses being taught in English and Spanish. Students and staff are expected to speak in the language of instruction in and outside of the classroom. A variety of accents are heard throughout our building, as this is desirable in order for our students to learn all languages as they are authentically spoken around the world.

E. CFIS Language Course Offerings



F. Our Approach to Teaching and Learning Languages

CFIS offers an early immersion program in which students begin French language learning in Junior Preschool and, by remaining in the program through graduation, develop bilingual proficiency. The Embark program provides an entry point for students with no prior French experience in Grades 1 to 4 and Grade 7.

The program prioritizes French language development, enabling students to build a strong foundation in oral language, reading, and writing while also accessing subject-area content in French. Research and experience demonstrate that students' proficiency in French is closely linked to both the amount of time and the level of engagement they have in learning and using the language.

French is the primary language of communication within the school environment and serves as the principal language of learning. Students are expected to use French in both formal and informal interactions, including conversations with teachers and peers, particularly during instructional time and in French-language contexts. Teachers model and actively promote the consistent use of French, supporting students in developing confidence and fluency in authentic, everyday communication. Teachers of English and Spanish similarly model and communicate consistently in the language of instruction to ensure consistency and support language acquisition across all programs.

All assessments are conducted in the language of instruction for the course. Courses taught in French require assessments to be completed in French; the same applies to courses taught in English or Spanish.

All teachers, regardless of subject area, are language teachers and share responsibility for supporting students' language development. In addition to delivering subject-specific content, they reinforce accurate and appropriate language use, supporting students in the continued development of their linguistic competencies.

Middle Years Programme (MYP)

In the Middle Years Programme (MYP) at CFIS, courses are taught in French across subject areas, with the exception of English and Spanish, which are delivered in their respective languages, as well as Design and some options. This approach ensures that students develop strong disciplinary knowledge while continuing to build fluency and confidence in French as a language of learning.

It is an IB requirement for schools to provide sustained language teaching in at least two languages for each year of the MYP. Students may study a minimum of:

- one language A and one language B, or
- two languages A, or
- two languages A and one language B. (Language and learning in IB programmes, p.17)

IB Bilingual Diploma

In the Diploma programme, Language courses are offered in two of the following subject groups:

Group 1: studies in language and literature
Group 2: language acquisition

In Group 1, courses are designed for students who have previous experience of using the language of the course in academic contexts. (p29 - Language & Learning in IB programmes) For students who have completed the PYP and/or the MYP at CFIS, the languages used for academics are predominantly French as well as some English (predominantly in ELA).

DP students are required to select at least one language from studies in language and literature (Language A). At CFIS, the primary language and literature course taken is English A: Language & Literature or English A: Literature.

DP students are also required to select a second language subject from either studies in language and literature or language acquisition (Group 2). Students also have the option of studying a third language as a sixth subject.

Group 2 offers two modern language courses:

- language B—for students with some experience of the language
- language ab initio—for students with little or no experience of the target language (*not offered at CFIS*).

Students in the DP are required to study:

- one group 1 and one group 2 subject, or
- two group 1 subjects.

For French, grade 10 students will be evaluated based on their competencies in receptive, productive, and interactive skills in the French language. These evaluations shall be conducted by their Grade 10 FLA teacher. Based on the results of these evaluations, students will be placed in either French A SL/HL or French B HL.

It is essential that students are placed appropriately in DP language courses. To support this, language placement practices are based on students' receptive, productive, interactive, and mediation proficiencies. Only courses that provide an appropriate level of linguistic challenge will enable students to consolidate and further develop their language competencies. Appendix 1 outlines the specific proficiency requirements for each course.

Students at CFIS who successfully complete the full Diploma Programme will obtain the IB DP

Bilingual Diploma, provided they meet IB requirements for bilingual certification.

All other IB DP subjects are taught in French, with the exception of Business Management. Students can complete extended essays in either French, English or Spanish depending on the EE topic and the advisor assigned to the student.

Advanced Bilingual Diploma

Students at CFIS who successfully complete the full diploma programme will obtain the Advanced Bilingual Diploma if they complete the following courses as part of their IB DP Diploma:

- Group 1:
    - English A Literature HL or English A Language & Literature HL
    - French A Language & Literature SL or HL
- Group 3:
    - Business Management SL (Taught in English)

Students are encouraged to complete one of the core elements in English (EE) and the others in French (CAS and TOK).

IB DP students have the choice to write their extended essays in either French or English. The exception to this is when a student wishes to write an extended essay in a group 1 or 2 language course where the essay needs to be written in the language of instruction. All DP students completing the full IB diploma will obtain a bilingual diploma providing they meet all IB's assessment requirements.

French

At CFIS, French is the official language of instruction for most subject areas (with the exceptions of English Language Arts, Spanish, MYP Design, IBDP Business, and some electives). Language development is continuous and recursive throughout a student's academic career at CFIS. Students enhance their language abilities by using their previously acquired knowledge in a wide variety of global contexts and with increasing sophistication. By learning and incorporating new language structures and vocabulary into their repertoire and using them in a variety of contexts, students develop language fluency and proficiency. Positive learning experiences enable students to continue extending their knowledge, skills and interests. The following factors guide us in our approaches to teaching and learning: (Alberta Education, 2000)

- French classes follow the Alberta Program of Studies; French Immersion Language and Literacy (FILAL, K-6) and French Language Arts (FLA, Grade 7-12).
- French literacy support is available for students in Kindergarten to Grade 5. Homeroom teachers, with the support of our educational assistants, target students who are not yet reaching grade level standard; work one-on-one, in small groups, and in the classroom.
- All Grade 12 students complete the IB DP French A SL, French A HL or French B HL course.

- Students in grade 12 French also may choose to write the DELF B2 level examination (government of France).
- Provincial exams in grades 6, 9, 12 are written in French, with the exception of English Language Arts.

English

At CFIS, the aim of English Language Arts & Literature (ELAL) is to enable each student to understand and appreciate language, and to use it confidently and competently in a variety of situations for communication, text creation, representation and critical understanding. Students enhance their English skills, becoming confident and competent users of all Language Arts skills in a variety of relevant contexts. Extending from their French courses, students are able to transfer their skills and language knowledge cross-linguistically via positive lesson experiences focussing on communication skills development including specialized Speech and Debate classes in middle school.

The following factors guide us in our approaches to teaching and learning:

- English as an Additional Language learners (EALs) from Preschool onwards complete provincial benchmark assessments in order to receive personalized support.
- In the spring of Grade 2, students begin introductory formal English instruction, with a focus on phonemic awareness, decoding, encoding and phonics, based on the Science of Reading.
- Students begin the Alberta English Language Arts & Literature (ELAL) program in Grade 3, and continue through Grade 12.
- Communication skills development is important at all grade levels.
- Grade 7 students take a public speaking course, all grade 8 students take a debate course, and all grade 9 students take a Model United Nations course in English.

Spanish

At CFIS, language development is continuous and recursive throughout grades 4 to 12 starting in PYP and culminating in DP. Students acquire and enhance their language abilities throughout the program and explore concepts in their academic context (history, society, science, geography, accents, arts, music, cultural experiences, vocabulary and grammar) enhancing their understanding with points of view in a diverse cultural world community.

By the end of the program, students are able to consider and discuss a range of topics within a wide variety of global contexts with increasing sophistication, fluency, and critical thinking. By learning and incorporating new language structures into their repertoire and using them in a variety of situations, students develop language fluency and proficiency, as well as the ability to consider multiple perspectives. Positive learning experiences enable students to continue extending their knowledge, skills and interests.

The following factors guide us in our approaches to teaching and learning (Alberta Education, 2000):

- Grades 4-6 classes use the Alberta Spanish Language & Culture nine-year curriculum as a base introduction to the language and culture to establish an ear for the conventions and a

love for exploring the rich Hispanic culture.

- Grades 7-10 classes follow and complete the Alberta Spanish Language & Culture 6-year curriculum, with room for plenty of enrichment and enhanced through cultural experiences.
- In Grade 10, most students choose to write the DELE A2/B1E level examination
    - CFIS is an official examination centre for the Instituto Cervantes, the representative of the Spanish Government's Ministry of Education's effort to promote the study of Spanish language and culture in foreign countries.
- In Grades 11 and 12, students have the option of completing the IB Language B SL, during which we follow the Alberta Spanish Language & Culture 9-year curriculum for Spanish 20-9y and 30-9y.

G. Languages of Communication in the School & Experiential Learning

- English is the language of business and administration, i.e. administrative meetings and communication with parents, including student report cards, are in English.
- Whenever possible, internal communication intended for students, including but not limited to posters, bulletin boards, and announcements will be posted in French or bilingual in both languages.
- All French-speaking staff are expected to speak French with one other in school hallways and classrooms whenever students are present.
- Students are provided with opportunities to use the French language outside of the classroom.
- French facilitators are preferred for field trips and when travelling, locations are carefully considered to allow students to use the French and Spanish languages in an authentic context.
- All Spanish-speaking staff are expected to speak to students in Spanish, both inside and outside the classroom.
- If teachers play music, films or videos in their classrooms, they are encouraged to choose media in the language of instruction.
- Assemblies are conducted primarily in French.
- PA announcements are communicated in French and/or English.

Home Language Support

When a student's first language is neither French nor English, CFIS strives to honour and celebrate their home language in the following ways:

- Permitting the use of research tools in their home language, to support academic projects and assignments that are produced in one of our languages of instruction (English, French, or Spanish).
- Providing opportunities for students and families to share their home language with their classmates and our community.
- Encouraging students to share their learning and progress with parents, using their home language.
- The Student Learning and Wellbeing team supports students in French and parents in English.

The resources provided to them are often in English due to our context, but recommendations are then applied in French in the school context.

CFIS also recognizes the importance of continuing to develop proficiency and fluency in students' first languages when they are languages of instruction, such as French for Francophone learners and Spanish for heritage or first-language speakers. These students are supported and challenged to extend their linguistic competencies through enriched learning opportunities, ensuring continued growth in accuracy, complexity, and confidence in both academic and social contexts.

We are in the process of equipping our libraries with resources that reflect the many home languages present in our school community.

H. School Language Objectives

English Language Learners

English as an additional language (EAL) learners, who are coded by Alberta Education, complete an annual evaluation in order to personalize their learning and provide their homeroom teacher with their area(s) of need.

DELF (Diplôme d'Études en Langue Française)

DELF is an official diploma awarded by the French Ministry of Education to certify the French language competency of candidates outside of France. CFIS students are assessed at the DELF level B2 at the grade 12 level.

DELE (Diplomas de Español como Lengua Extranjera)

The DELE exam is the official exam in Spanish proficiency. CFIS students may have a choice of different levels of the DELE exam in grade 10. We recommend students write the A2/B1E exam, which is intended for students under 18, so the topics and vocabulary are more in line with relevant experiences for this age group. This exam allows students to earn either level, depending on how they perform. Some heritage speakers and/or students who complete IB Spanish may be encouraged to write the B2 level. This should be discussed with the teacher on a case-by-case basis.

I. Rights and Responsibilities

All Staff and Faculty

Rights	CFIS celebrates being a multilingual environment. Amongst themselves, faculty and staff are encouraged to speak in their language of choice. We acknowledge that not everyone speaks the three languages of instruction and that efforts will be made to be inclusive.
Responsibilities	• Speak in the language of instruction with students inside and outside of classrooms. When possible, extracurriculars should be offered in French or Spanish. • Ensure that publicly available materials are free from error, regardless of the language used. This includes student work, posters and electronic announcements posted on classroom walls and school hallways. • Strive to ensure that all materials provided to students are in the target language of instruction.

Leadership Team

Responsibilities	• Prioritize strong proficiency in the target language of instruction when recruiting and retaining pedagogical staff. • Foster an environment that values and promotes multilingualism • Ensure the regular review of the CFIS Language Policy • Ensure that students have the opportunity to take DELF and DELE exams at CFIS • Ensure that faculty and staff have the opportunity to pursue language proficiency professional development. • Ensure that the pedagogical budget provides physical and virtual resources used to facilitate language development • Ensure incoming students' French, English, and Spanish language proficiency is sufficient to keep up with CFIS academic programming at the PYP, MYP and/or DP level, in accordance with the CFIS Admissions Policy

Teachers

Responsibilities	• Communicate with students in the language of instruction inside and outside of class time. • Teachers are expected to teach correct use of the target language in the context of their courses. • All French-speaking staff are encouraged to speak to students in French outside of the classroom. • All Spanish-speaking teachers & staff are encouraged to speak to their students in Spanish, both inside and outside the classroom. • All French-speaking staff & teachers are encouraged to speak French with each other in school hallways and classrooms, whenever students are present.

Students

Rights	• Be able to access information in the three languages of instruction. • Outside of class time, students may communicate among themselves in the language of their choice, honouring their multilingual backgrounds.
Responsibilities	• During class, communicate with teachers and peers in the language of instruction. • Outside of class, speak with French- and Spanish-speaking teachers in the target language • Use spelling, referencing, and translation tools ethically, in alignment with the CFIS Assessment Policy • Be active participants in our multilingual environment.

Parents

Rights	• Receive official school communication in English. • Seek assistance and information from teachers, and language coaches to support their child's learning of the three languages taught at CFIS. • Meet and request information from teachers, language coaches, administration to seek the progress of their child's language acquisition • Have their home language respected and valued by the school community. • Request to bring a translator at parent-teacher or parent-administration meetings.
Responsibilities	• Understand the nature and approach of CFIS' French Immersion programming • Encourage their child in learning English, French and Spanish

Library/Learning Commons Staff

Responsibilities	• Ensure access for all students to a variety of virtual and physical resources including books, magazines, online subscriptions, databases, and digital World Language Collection. • Present materials in all 3 languages of instruction. • Provide guidance to students and faculty regarding the ethical use of spelling, referencing, and translation tools, in alignment with the CFIS Assessment Policy.

J. Admissions: Language proficiency expectations by grade of entry

CFIS provides a variety of entry points for admission to our school. New students in Preschool to Grade 12 must complete an assessment and fulfill the requirements of the admission processes in order to be offered admission. The grade level knowledge and understanding of English, French and Spanish vary according to the grade the student is applying for.

Grade of entry	English	French	Spanish
ECE (Junior Preschool to Kindergarten)	No previous knowledge necessary	No previous knowledge necessary	No previous knowledge necessary
Embark program (Grade 1 to 4)	Necessary	No previous knowledge necessary	No previous knowledge necessary
Elementary (Grades 1 to 2)	Base level necessary	Necessary	No previous knowledge necessary
Elementary (Grades 3, 4 and 5)	Functional	Necessary	No previous knowledge necessary
Middle School (Grades 6 to 8)	Necessary	Necessary	No previous knowledge necessary. Students are provided with support to accelerate their learning
High School (Grades 9 to 12)	Necessary	Necessary	No previous knowledge necessary. Students need to catch up with cohort if they select Spanish as a course.

K. Links to Other Policies and Divisional Handbooks

All CFIS students have access to the academic programs provided at the school. Students who have specific educational needs are given accommodations as per the CFIS Inclusion Policy and CFIS Assessment Policy.

Link to the CFIS Academic Integrity Policy.

All assessments are conducted in the language of instruction of that subject. However, DP students can choose to write their extended essays in either English, French or Spanish as per the CFIS Language Policy.

L. Policy Revision

This policy is a living document, one for which every teacher shares responsibility in interpreting and implementing. The policy itself benefits from review on a three-year cycle by administration, coordinators and teachers. It is informed by student input.

Faculty, curriculum coordinators, and administration may also meet periodically to make minor revisions as needed.

References

IB Publications

The following resources are available on the IB public website.

- Academic integrity policy
- DP subject briefs
- Diploma Programme DP language courses: Overview and placement guidance (2025)
- IB language policy
- Middle Years Programme subject briefs
- Benchmarking selected IB language courses to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2023)
- Programme standards and practices (2020)

The following resources are available on the PRC for IB World Schools or IB candidate schools.

- Diploma Programme Assessment procedures
- IB language tenets
- The IB language tenets in practice

Other Publications

Alberta Government. (2014). Handbook for French Immersion Administrators.

Lazaruk, W. (2007). Linguistic, academic, and cognitive benefits of French immersion. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, *63*(5), 605-627. https://doi.org/10.3138/cmlr.63.5.605

Makropoulos, J. (2010). Student engagement in an Ottawa French immersion high school program. *Canadian Journal of Education*, *33*(3), 516+. https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A259841123/AONE?u=albertak12&sid=AONE&xid=ada9d48f

Roy, S. (2010). Not truly, not entirely ... pas comme les francophones. *Canadian Journal of Education*, *33*(3), 541+. https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A259841124/AONE?u=albertak12&sid=AONE&xid=a9fae5ce

Appendix 1

Proficiency descriptors to guide placement in DP language courses • These proficiencies are not prerequisites, and it is not necessary to meet all descriptors for each skill in order to be appropriately placed in the subject or level. • The word "texts" includes texts that are written, oral, visual or multimedia.			
	Language B SL	Language B HL	Language A courses, and literature
Receptive	Students can understand the meaning of simple authentic texts, and some of the meaning of more complex texts. They can understand explicit information and interpret some implicit meaning in texts regarding familiar topics.	Students can understand the meaning of simple authentic texts and the basic meaning of more complex authentic texts. They can analyse and comment on the language used and information presented in those texts.	Students understand the literal meaning of a range of texts, both simple and complex. They show the ability to think critically about and interpret implicit meanings, and to analyse and comment on how the language used in those texts constructs meaning and contributes to creating an effect.
Productive	Students can produce texts on familiar topics using simple language (and some elements of complex language) generally accurately. Messages produced are generally comprehensible, despite errors.	Students can produce texts on a variety of topics using both simple and complex language generally accurately. Messages produced are comprehensible, despite minor errors.	Students have a wide range of linguistic resources, including complex structures and vocabulary, and can express basic and complex ideas clearly in speech and in writing. Language is accurate, and there is an awareness of register and style.
Interactive	Students can engage with some confidence and sense of audience and purpose in rehearsed and in simple, unrehearsed exchanges to communicate their understanding and opinions on familiar topics. They can engage in more complex exchanges, but with limitations and difficulties.	Students can engage confidently in spontaneous exchanges to communicate and discuss their understanding of, and opinions on, familiar and some unfamiliar topics, demonstrating an understanding of the codes and conventions of conversations. Limitations or difficulties rarely impede the	Students can engage easily and confidently in authentic and spontaneous conversation to communicate and discuss their understanding and opinions on a range of topics, both familiar and unfamiliar, and simple and complex. They demonstrate a clear understanding of the codes and conventions of

		conversation.	conversations.
Mediation	Students can grasp and convey essential information on familiar topics generally clearly.	Students can grasp and convey essential information on familiar topics and topics of personal interest clearly and sometimes effectively.	Students are capable of fully grasping complex ideas, organizing them with clarity, and then presenting them clearly and effectively, with a clear sense of audience and purpose.

(Diploma Programme DP language courses: Overview and placement guidance, December 2025)