

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL DHAKA

Language Policy

2026-2027



MISSION

ISD is the premier International school of Bangladesh, preparing students for global citizenship and academic success through a Dynamic IB curriculum supported by a diverse community.

VISION

ISD will empower our students through innovative learning to achieve academic

DEFINITION OF LEARNING

Students actively and critically acquire new knowledge and skills to solve real world problems.

DEFINITION OF INTERNATIONAL MINDEDNESS

Awareness, Responsibility and Action for our Shared World



● WELLBEING ● KINDNESS ● RESPONSIBILITY

Contents

1.Philosophy	2
2. Practices	3
3. Language Profile	3
4.Language of Instruction	4
5. Mother Tongue & Host Country Language	4
6. Additional Languages	4
7. English as an Additional Language Philosophy EAL	5
8. Language Options & Pathways	6
6. Admissions Procedures	8
7. Standardised Testing: PM Benchmark, MAP, WIDA, CAT 4	8
8. Roles & Responsibilities	9
9. Language Resources	10
10. Review of Policy	11
11.Works Cited	11
12. Appendix 1	12

1.Philosophy

Language is fundamental to students' intellectual, social and emotional development. By 'learning language, learning about language, and learning through language' (Halliday, 308–326), students construct meaning, develop an appreciation for language and become creative and confident communicators.

International School Dhaka recognises and values bilingualism, multilingualism, mother tongue and home languages. Language is seen as critical for maintaining cultural identity and emotional stability and as a means to exploring and developing intercultural understanding.

As such, the school is committed to providing a comprehensive language programme that features English as the language of instruction, Bengali as both a mother tongue and host and home language, as well as support for other languages and the acquisition of additional languages.

2. Practices

- Teaching and learning in language classrooms is based on constructivist learning strategies such as inquiry, project based learning and communicative language learning.
- All teachers are considered as language teachers and responsible for the ongoing development of English, the language of instruction.
- Students are placed in language classes based on proficiency in order to cater for the growth of language.
- The 'Reading and Writing Workshop' framework will be used for the PYP programme from KG – Grade 5.
- Regular feedback and assessment on language learning will be provided on an ongoing basis to students.
- Standardised assessment will be used on an ongoing basis to determine student progress in the language of instruction (MAP and WIDA).
- Reporting of student progress to parents will occur on a regular basis.
- The school will endeavour to place students in the best suited language courses based on student proficiency, determined by testing and on best suited learning pathways.
- Regular counselling and guidance will be provided to parents and students on language options and pathways during transition phases between programmes (at Grade 5, 8 and 10).
- The school is committed to providing professional development to support teachers in their role as language teachers.

3. Language Profile

Students at International School Dhaka come with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The student body consists of students from Bangladesh, or of Bangladeshi origin, who speak Bengali as their mother tongue, as well as students from other regions of South Asia and beyond with various different mother tongue languages.

In terms of Bengali language, due to regional variations and colloquialisms, students at ISD have varying levels of spoken and written proficiency. Students who hold passports from other nationalities, but are of Bangladeshi origin, may speak the language but have limited skills in reading and writing. To meet the needs of these varying language profiles, the school provides Bengali at different proficiency levels. For non-Bengali speakers the option to study French is provided in the PYP, MYP and DP.

A database of a student's first and second language, recorded in the admissions process, is maintained on Managebac. Student language placement is tracked against their profile and monitored throughout the PYP and MYP in order to inform pathways into the DP.

4. Language of Instruction

The language of instruction is English, and all students are taught in the language of instruction from Early Years to Grade 12. Students who join ISD with limited skills in the language of instruction are provided EAL support in order to access the curriculum. It is recognised that all teachers are considered as language teachers, and reinforce the learning of the language of instruction in all classes.

5. Mother Tongue & Host Country Language

Mother tongue is valued at ISD. Bengali, the language spoken by many students, is taught across the IB continuum. At the IB DP level, students can make a choice to continue studying Bengali or opt for an additional language.

Students whose mother tongue is not Bengali are encouraged to use their language through informal means such as co-curricular language groups and the use of the library, which aims to stock books in a range of languages. The Mother Tongue Coordinator (MTCO) works with families in the MYP to hire suitable external tutors and deliver a mother tongue course during the additional language learning block. The MTCO also oversees the self-taught courses in the DP offered through Pamoja or via tutors.

6. Additional Languages

In the context of ISD, 'Additional languages' are defined as 'a language other than the one that students are the most proficient in'. In Primary, the focus is on developing students' English language skills, and for Bangladeshi students, Bengali.

Students who do not hold a Bangladeshi passport and are native Bengali speakers may choose Bengali or French in K–5. Native and near-native English speakers who do not require EAL support can choose French or Bengali. All Primary Students G1–5 receive an additional block of French and Bengali each week.

Primary Additional Languages

Grade	Language	Frequency
PK – K	Bengali	2 blocks per week
G1–5	Bengali / French Additional Bengali for expat students Additional French for Bangladeshi students	4 blocks per week 1 block per week 1 block per week

7. English as an Additional Language Philosophy EAL

At Admission

Based on the Admissions Policy, all applicants to the school are assessed on language proficiency through MAP. WIDA testing is used as an additional tool to define English language proficiency. EAL support is provided to students who have a high potential to increase their proficiency to the necessary level within one academic year. Special cases with beginner-level applicants will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, and an additional charge may be levied.

PYP: K-5

- Identified EAL students receive pull-out and push-in support in their HR classes.
- Exemption to language learning class will be made on a case-by-case basis for a specified timeframe, based on student needs.

MYP: Grade 6–10

- EAL students, based on level of proficiency (as assessed through WIDA), are placed in an English Language Acquisition class and withdrawn from Additional Language classes to receive EAL support.

- In the event that the student's Mother Tongue is Bengali, then he/she will not be withdrawn from the Bengali Language Acquisition, unless the student's needs deem pull-out sessions essential.
- Push-in support will be provided by EAL teachers in other classes based on the needs identified in the Individual Learning Plan (ILP).
- For beginner-level EAL students, translation devices may be used.

DP: Grade 11 & 12

Students can gain credit for English through the study of English Language & Literature (Group 1). EAL students will be supported via Learning Support and may be eligible for English B (Group 2) and School Supported Self-Taught (SSST) Mother Tongue Literature A, or Bengali A, as appropriate.

8. Language Options & Pathways

PYP : K-5

In Primary School, students develop the language of instruction: English. In addition, Bengali and French are offered as additional languages.

Students who are non-native speakers of English and score under 4.0 on the WIDA assessment will be prioritised for EAL support before the introduction of a second language.

Year	Offering
Academic Year 2025–26	Pre-K: Bangla × 2 per week KG: Bangla × 2 & French × 2 per week Gr 1–5 (Bengali track): 4 periods Bengali + 1 period French per week Gr 1–5 (French track): 4 periods French + 1 period Bengali per week
Academic Year 2026–27	Pre-K: Bangla × 2 per week KG - G5 : 4 x week Bangla; 4 x week × French KG - G5 Bangla students 1 x week French KG - G5 French students 1 x week Bangla

MYP: Grade 6–10

Grade 6 students' language options are based on the MYP Language learning requirements. Students are expected to study a Language and Literature course and a Language Acquisition course. There is also the option to study two Language & Literature courses for students proficient in both English and Bengali. In the case of EAL and Learning Support students, the requirements may be modified based on Individual Learning Plans (ILP) and level of support (see Appendix 2).

MYP Language Acquisition Phase Placement & Transition

ISD offers three Language Acquisition courses: Bengali, English and French. Each of the three languages is offered at multiple phase levels. For Bengali and English Acquisition, the aim is to transition students into the respective Language & Literature courses as soon as the individual student's language proficiency allows.

Language	Phase Range
Bengali Acquisition	Phases 3–5*
English Acquisition	Phases 3–5*
French Acquisition	Phases 1–4 (depending on student profile)

** Phases 1–2 for Bengali & English occur within the PYP and are not offered in Secondary. Students who do not reach Phase 3 will be placed in French and EAL support.*

All students must reach and attain satisfactory grades at Phase 5 in order to transition into the Language & Literature course. Students in Bengali and English Acquisition are monitored regularly to determine if a phase change can occur. Guidelines for phase changes and transition into Language & Literature can be found in Appendix 1.

Summary Table of Language Pathways in the MYP

Category	Detail
Language of Instruction	English
Studies in Language & Literature	English Bengali (Mother Tongue)
Language Acquisition	English Acquisition – Phase 3–5* Bengali Acquisition – Phase 3–5* French – Phase 1–4 (depending on student profile)
EAL & SEN students with a language disability	Placement in language class is based on support requirements as per Level 1–4 in Inclusion Policy (see Appendix 2).

** Students not eligible to enter Bengali at Phase 3 will be placed in French Phase 1.*

** Students not eligible to enter English at Phase 3 will be placed in EAL support.*

DP: Grade 11-12

Grade 11–12 students' language options are based around the DP language requirements. Students are expected to study one Group 1: Studies in Language and Literature course and one Group 2: Language Acquisition course. Students who are proficient in both Bengali and

English may choose to study two Group 1 courses, thus resulting in the opportunity to earn an IBDP Bilingual Diploma.

Students in Grade 11–12 can be placed in any of the below language courses based on their proficiency, which may be determined by teacher assessment and scores on MAP Reading and Language Use assessments. Due to the structure of the IB Diploma Programme, students on the Full Diploma pathway may not change language choices, whereas students on the DP Courses and US Diploma pathways have more flexibility.

All students are required to complete and pass four years of English language courses in grades 9–12 in order to receive the ISD (NEASC-accredited) Diploma.

Summary Table of Language Pathways in DP

Category	Detail
Language of Instruction	English
Group 1 – Studies in Language and Literature	English Language & Literature (SL/HL) Bengali Literature (SL/HL) School Supported Self-Taught (SSST) Mother Tongue (SL only)
Group 2 – Language Acquisition	English B (offered as needed) French B (SL/HL) Spanish ab Initio (SL only)
ISD Diploma – IB Courses Programme (non-IB Diploma)	Must complete two years of English (Group 1 or Group 2). May elect or decline an additional language, provided they have received 2 credits of an additional language (ISD Diploma requirement) in grades 9–10.
ISD Diploma – Modified Courses Programme (non-IB Diploma)	Must complete two years of English (Group 1 or Group 2). May elect or decline an additional language, provided they have received 2 credits of an additional language (ISD Diploma requirement) in grades 9–10.

6. Languages at Admissions

At admission, all new students undergo language assessments in order to determine placement. All new applicants will be assessed on their English language proficiency during the admissions process, initially using MAP Reading and Language Use assessments. A follow-up WIDA assessment can be useful to determine the level of proficiency across the four language domains.

Based on the scores of these tools a recommendation is made to the respective Principal for the placement of the student in grade level and language phase. Applicants need to have reached a level of English proficiency that enables them to work in an academic setting. However, applicants who are not proficient in English, but have a high potential to increase

their proficiency to the necessary level within one academic year, can be admitted if sufficient EAL resources are available and for an additional fee. Specific language proficiency expectations will be communicated to parents and the applicant upon admission, with follow-up meetings scheduled accordingly.

7. Standardised Testing: PM Benchmark, MAP, WIDA, CAT 4

PM Benchmark

PM Benchmark is used in primary school for assessing students' reading level. Twice yearly, the reading coordinator assesses all students in KG – Grade 5 and provides homeroom teachers with specific feedback. Homeroom teachers use this feedback in their instruction and individual conferencing during readers workshops. Students who read two grade levels below their actual level will receive extra support from the reading coordinator or Advancement Centre.

At the beginning of the academic year, WIDA is administered in KG to assess EAL learners' listening and speaking skills only. By the end of the year all four domains (listening, speaking, reading and writing) are covered.

MAP Testing

MAP Testing is conducted from KG – Grade 10. Primary students complete MAP tests 3 times per year while Secondary students complete them twice annually. The language component of the MAP assessment is used extensively for placement and monitoring of progress and to inform teaching and learning.

MAP data informs the following teaching practices:

- Placement of students at admissions in the appropriate English class.
- Placement of students entering the MYP.
- Placement of students in appropriate MYP English Language Acquisition phases.
- Tracking English language development of all students and informing parents.
- Triangulating data between MAP testing, observations, formative and summative testing.
- Informing subject placement decisions in the Diploma Programme.
- Informing teaching and learning strategies within the classroom.

WIDA Testing

WIDA testing is used as a tool to inform teachers about a student's level of English language proficiency. WIDA Model assesses all four language domains to create a comprehensive report on a student's language abilities. WIDA is used to determine EAL support and progress.

CAT4 Testing

CAT 4 (Cognitive Abilities Testing) is a standardised assessment measuring students' reasoning abilities across verbal, non-verbal, quantitative, and spatial domains. Unlike achievement tests, it assesses cognitive potential rather than acquired knowledge, making it especially useful for identifying the needs of English Language Learners. CAT4 results inform differentiated instruction and help ensure equitable access to learning for all students. CAT 4 testing is conducted at 2-3 year intervals in Grade 5, 8 and 10.

8. Roles & Responsibilities

Pedagogical Leaders / Coordinators

- Ensure the curriculum provides support and access for all students who learn different languages.
- Maintain a central record of a student's language profile on the student management systems.
- Inform parents and students about language choices, support and placement as students move through programmes.
- Support and provide all IB teachers with PD and the tools to support language learning.
- Receive regular training on languages and their impact on student learning.

Teachers

- Support the development of student language within classrooms as language teachers.
- Engage in professional learning connected with effective strategies to support and develop language.
- Initiate a referral process to the Advancement Centre when students require extra support in a specific language.

Librarian

- Order and maintain a range of appropriate materials to support the language profiles of students.
- In collaboration with classroom teachers, support the learning of literacy and effective research and communication of information.
- Promote literacy development and languages through activities and events organised by the library.

Parents

- Encourage language learning at home through reading and literacy practices.
- Provide the school an accurate picture of the student language profile.
- May use the school library to access resources to support student language learning.

9. Language Resources

- Moss Flower Units in reading , Writing & Phonics
- Jump rope Readers
- Words their Way
- Read Theory
- RAZ Kids / Learning A-Z
- WIDA Testing, MAP Testing, CAT 4 Testing
- Primary levelled readers
- Language & Literature textbooks
- Library books across a variety of genres
- InThinking website access
- Databases: World Book Online, Newsela
- Kognity, Pamoja
- Secondary Book Room with collection of reading Resources

10. Review of Policy

The ISD language policy will be reviewed on an annual basis for ongoing updates, and formally reviewed every 3 years in line with board policy review.

Date	Updates	Significant Additions	Approval Status
April 2026	Minor	Addition of French in PYP and its procedures. Clarification on English LA teacher HoD change. Checking for alignment across programmes.	Submitted to Director for Board Approval: June 2026
October 2025	Minor	New Guiding Statements	
March 2024	Minor	Regular Update	
June 2022 & 2023	Minor		
April 2020	Complete Review	Full Review — including new Guide Updates	

11.Works Cited

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Halliday, M. A. K. “Three Aspects of Children’s Language Development: Learning Language, Learning through Language, Learning about Language.” *The Language of Early Childhood*, 2004, pp. 308–326.

Making the PYP Happen. International Baccalaureate Organization, 2007.

“Mission.” *IBO.org*, International Baccalaureate Organization, 2005–2019, ibo.org/about-the-ib/mission/.

MYP: Language Acquisition Guide. International Baccalaureate Organization, 2014.

PYP: From Principles into Practice. International Baccalaureate Organization, 2018.

PYP: Language Scope and Sequence. International Baccalaureate Organization, 2018.

12. Appendix 1

MYP Language Placement & Progress – Guidelines for Staff

Language Acquisition Placement at MYP 1 (Grade 6) and New Students (Gr 6–10)

- English placement: MAP test data and a written task response.
- Bengali placement: a reading and writing assessment based on Acquisition phase 4 criteria, coordinated by HoD Bengali.
- French placement: determined after a student has spoken with a French teacher. If no prior learning, begins at Phase 1.

Language Phase Change

Language learning progresses at different rates and the opportunity to change phases occurs three times a year:

- Within the first four weeks at the beginning of the academic year.
- At progress report in January.
- At the end of the year.

Changing phases needs to be handled carefully since changes need to be tracked and often involve movement between classes taught by different teachers. For a student to change phase, he/she must be achieving a level of 6 and above in all of the assessment criteria.

Phase Change Within the First Four Weeks

- Students are placed in the phase recommended at the end of the previous year.
- In the rare event that reconsideration is required, this must be done within the first four weeks of the academic year. The HoD must be informed with reasoning and evidence, and then seeks approval from MYPCo.
- Teachers can conduct a diagnostic test at the beginning of the year to re-confirm placement accuracy.

Phase Change at Progress Report in January

- HoD meets with team members to review report data and determine eligible students.
- Students achieving a level 6 or above (with no criteria below 6) are considered for phase change.
- HoD enters eligible students and their report data for MYPCo review.
- MYPCo checks and approves changes. HoD is informed and asked to recommend class placement if a teacher change is required.
- The subject teacher emails parents and updates the ManageBac phase level.

Phase / Class Change at End of Year

- HoD meets with team members to review report data and determine eligible students.
- Students achieving a level 6 or above are considered for phase change.
- HoD enters eligible students and data for MYPCo review.
- The subject teacher includes a comment in the report card to reflect the phase change.
- MYPCo checks, approves changes, and informs HoD.

Sample Email for LA Phase Change

Dear Mr and Mrs. [Surname],

I am pleased to inform you that your child has been making consistent progress in [Subject] classes and will therefore be moving up a phase from [date].

It may initially take some time to adjust to the expectations of the new phase, as the assessment criteria are more challenging. However, with continued enthusiasm and application, a smooth transition is expected.

Congratulations and we look forward to seeing further progress.

Course Change: Language Acquisition to Language & Literature

For Bengali and English Language Acquisition, students MUST display success in Phase 5 assessment criteria to exit Language Acquisition and enter Language & Literature. Change can occur only at the end of a term/reporting cycle or at the beginning of the year.

Beginning of Year

New students or students who made rapid progress can be moved to Lang Lit at the beginning of the year. Diagnostic data must be in place to support the decision. Steps 2–5 below will be followed.

Mid-Term & End of Term

- Students MUST be in Phase 5 of the acquisition course and achieve grades of 6 and above in all assessment criteria.
- HoD meets with team members to review report data and determine eligible students.
- HoD enters eligible students and their data for MYPCo review.
- MYPCo checks and approves changes. HoD is informed and class placement is recommended.
- MYPCo informs parents and initiates class change or updates Master Class list for end-of-year exit students.
- At the end of year, teachers will indicate in the Report comments when a student is changing phases or changing to language & Literature.

MYP Language Acquisition Global Proficiency Table

Language Acquisition Guide – Published & Updated April 2023

Emergent Communicator		Capable Communicator		Proficient Communicator	
Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5	Phase 6
Understand and respond to simple authentic multimodal texts in recognizable formats.	Understand and respond to a variety of simple authentic multimodal texts in recognizable formats.	Understand and respond to a variety of simple and some complex authentic multimodal texts.	Understand and respond to a wide variety of simple and some complex authentic multimodal texts.	Analyse specific information, ideas, opinions and attitudes in a variety of complex authentic multimodal texts.	Analyse and evaluate important information, details and ideas in a wide variety of complex authentic multimodal texts.