



Language Policy

*At ISH our vision is to develop a community of caring, compassionate, honest, open-minded global citizens who enjoy learning in critical and creative ways.
We strive to develop a positive sense of self and engage with our world on a local and global scale.*

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International School Haarlem Language Policy

The International School of Haarlem is a diverse community, representing over 50 nationalities with over 35 languages spoken across the primary and secondary departments. Many of our students are fully bi- or even trilingual. We celebrate this diversity through special events such as International Day, but in actuality this linguistic and cultural diversity is at the core of all that we do at International School Haarlem.

Though our working language at ISH is English, it is not unusual to hear Dutch, Spanish, French, Russian, Telugu, or Hindi being spoken on the playground at breaks. What is special is to hear students who do not speak those languages natively joining in. We encourage students to develop their mother tongue and to expand their knowledge through additional language learning at ISH.

We believe that learning multiple languages helps our ISH students to be **open-minded**:

- We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others.
- We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from experience.

(“International Baccalaureate Organization”)

Embracing language diversity and learning enables our ISH students to be **communicators**:

- We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways.
- We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

(“International Baccalaureate Organization”)

These philosophical ideas form the underpinning of our Language Policy at ISH. This policy explains:

1. [What are the types of language courses at ISH?](#)
2. [What is the student’s Language Profile?](#)
3. [How are English classes organized at ISH?](#)
4. [What does it mean to be a Dutch International School?](#)
5. [What other language choices are there?](#)
6. [How do the phases work in Language Acquisition courses?](#)
7. [How does the school encourage language, including mother tongue, development?](#)

The ISH language policy is reviewed annually by the pedagogical leadership team (MYP Coordinator, DP Coordinator and Head of Education) to ensure compliance with IB requirements. Edits or additions are presented to the staff, students and the participation council (Medezeggenschapsraad; MR). It is also subjected to two yearly review by the Senior Management Team and MR.

Comments or questions about the language policy should be directed [Kate Lupson](#), (MYP Coordinator) and [Stavros Melachroinos](#) (DP Coordinator).

1. What are the types of language courses at ISH?

In the MYP and DP we offer language courses at two levels:

MYP Language Acquisition (LA) and DP Language B / ab initio

Language Acquisition or Language B / ab initio courses are meant for language learners (not mother tongue speakers) in various stages of development. In these courses students learn to communicate in another language and to understand the culture(s) of that language's speakers.

The school offers;

Language	MYP 1-5 (LA)	DP 1-2 (B SL/HL)	DP 1-2 (ab initio SL)
Dutch	x	x	
English	x	x	
French	x	x	x
Spanish	x	x	x

Our MYP language acquisition courses work with phases, which describe the level of sophistication the learner has in the target language. A Phase 1 student is a beginning language learner, while a student in Phase 5 or 6 may be ready to take part in a Language & Literature class.

For more information on phases see [section 6](#).

MYP / DP (Language A:) Language & Literature (LL) and School-Supported Self-Taught Language A: Literature (SSST)

Language & Literature courses are meant for mother tongue speakers and advanced language learners. These courses focus on how language is used to communicate and create.

For DP students who wish to study a language A course in their mother tongue, ISH offers and the SSST Language A: Literature SL option. The school offers language-specific tutor support and generic supervision, but it requires from students to be more autonomous than school-taught students.

The school offers;

Language	MYP 1-5 (LL)	DP 1-2 (LL SL/HL)	DP 1-2 (SSST SL)
Dutch	x	x	
English	x	x	
Language A: Literature			x

Language placement in DP

The language placement in DP follows the guidelines below;

	End of MYP 5	DP placement
Phase 1		Ab initio
Phase 2		Ab initio (in rare cases) Language B SL
Phase 3		Language B SL
Phase 4		Language B SL/HL
Phase 5		Language B SL/HL
Phase 5	It is recommended the student has at least one semester in MYP language and literature before starting these DP courses.	SSST Language A: Literature SL Language A: Language and Literature SL
Phase 6		SSST Language A: Literature SL Language A: Language and Literature SL/HL

(International Baccalaureate Organization)

2. What is a Language Profile?

At ISH we believe that all teachers are language teachers. Even when students are in mathematics or science class, they are constantly reflecting on and communicating their knowledge and understanding. We want our staff to be aware of the language diversity in their classes so that they can best support the students in their subjects.

Therefore, all ISH students complete a Language Profile questionnaire, which describes a student's exposure (how much a language is used at home, in sports, with friends, etc.) to different languages. This will help us, especially for incoming students, make a preliminary placement of the students in LA or LL and decide what level of support the student may need.

As a student grows and develops across the years, their Language Profile is updated to reflect their changing language habits and proficiency. Every effort is made to support the students based on their individual needs and to place them in the most appropriately challenging class.

3. How are English classes organized at ISH?

The working language of ISH is English. This means that all classes (with the exception of other language classes) are in English. We recognize that this can be challenging for our non-native speakers. Therefore, all teachers use scaffolded language and tasks to differentiate for the various language levels within the classroom.

The working language of International School Harlem is English.

Additionally, all students at the International School of Haarlem study English.

We offer:

MYP; English Language & Literature (ELL) and English Language Acquisition (ELA).

DP; English A: Language & Literature (ELL), English A: Literature (SSST EL) and English B.

We focus on helping our language learners' transition from a MYP ELA course to a supported ELL course as quickly as possible.

Placement in ELL/SSST EL or ELA/English B

New students are initially placed in ELL/SSST EL or ELA/English B based on their Language Profile. All students will be evaluated in the fourth week to determine whether the placement is correct and to find out the strengths and weaknesses of the students. This is done both informally, in conversation with the student, and formally, in the form of a reading test. Students who show that they have trouble with verbal communication in an informal setting will not be asked to do a reading test until they are more confident communicators.

MYP 1

Students who are new to the school in MYP 1 will sit a reading assessment in the first few weeks of school. This is the same reading assessment that our students who have come from ISH Primary sat in May of Group 7 (the last year in Primary at ISH).

With this assessment we will have a reading age for all of our students in MYP 1, for both native and non-native English speakers. In MYP 1, English Language Acquisition (ELA) and English Language & Literature (ELL) are team taught, with targeted instruction and pull-out groups. Thus, ELA students often study the same material as ELL students, with support. ELA students are assessed on ELA criteria; when they have made sufficient progress, they may be assessed on ELL criteria, in discussion with the English teachers.

ELL students may also benefit from having access to ELA instruction that focuses on writing skills like spelling, punctuation and grammar. Our team-teaching model therefore has a flexible approach to grouping in order to best serve our students, regardless of whether they are native or non-native English speakers.

MYP 2

All students in MYP 2 (new and returning) will take a progress reading assessment so that we can see how our youngest secondary students have developed. We will experiment with the team-teaching model of ELA and ELL in MYP 2 beginning in 2020.

Upper Years of MYP/DP

Students who are new to the school in MYP 3-5 and DP1 and whose Language Profile indicates that

they might be best served by an ELA/English B class may be given the WIDA, a screening test that helps determine the language level of English language learners. This will help us decide how we can best support the student in quickly transitioning to ELL/SSST EL, if possible. This may include lightening the class load of the student so that the student can have targeted one-on-one instruction.

Except in special circumstances, all MYP 5 students will take ELL.

How are ELA/English B students further supported at ISH?

All teachers are made aware of the Language Profiles of their students so that they are able to scaffold assignments and tasks appropriately. Teachers make use of subject-specific word walls, which give students a visual cue of key vocabulary.

ELA/English B students are asked to have a bilingual home language dictionary. Students may always use this dictionary during assessments. Students are also given access to WordHippo, Lexipedia, Lingro, and Encyclopaedia Britannica to use as reference in classes.

Students may be invited to after school homework club where they can receive support in their assignments or have extra time for assessments.

How are ELL/SSST EL students further supported at ISH?

There are various clubs available to students at ISH. Some of these, such as Debate and Newspaper may be beneficial for our ELL/SSST EL students, though they are open to ELA/English B students as well.

4. What does it mean to be a Dutch international school?

The International School of Haarlem is happy to make the beautiful historic city of Haarlem its home. We strive to be part of the local community. This means that our students engage with the community in service activities like picking up trash in the neighbourhood or making brochures to showcase the highlights of Haarlem in their Individuals & Societies classes. But it also means that we prioritize the learning of Dutch at ISH.

All MYP students at the International School of Haarlem study Dutch. We also create opportunities for all DP students to study Dutch,

We offer:

MYP; Dutch Language & Literature (DLL) and Dutch Language Acquisition (DLA)

DP; Dutch A: Language & Literature (DLL), Dutch A: Literature (SSST DL) and Dutch B.

The Netherlands has a strong “club” culture, with things like sports and orchestras typically taking place outside of school in a community-based club setting. We want our students to feel confident to take part in these clubs, as they are a wonderful way to learn about Dutch culture and integrate into their community. Our Dutch lessons enable this participation.

In addition, the Netherlands is home to many excellent tertiary educational institutions, and we want our students to be able to take full advantage of them, should their families decide to stay in the Netherlands. We therefore have a flexible approach, recognizing that we should place students in the most appropriately challenging course that can help them access Dutch society.

What are the options for Dutch instruction at our school?

MYP Dutch Language Acquisition (DLA) Phase 1

New students who have never had Dutch exposure will be placed in DLA Phase 1. This phase may also include students who have had some exposure to Dutch, for example in our Primary School. The Dutch primary teacher will discuss placement with the Dutch MYP / DP teachers.

MYP DLA Phases 2-4 / DP Dutch B SL/HL

Students who have had Dutch exposure may begin in a higher phase of DLA / DP Dutch B. Students coming from our Primary School who have had more extensive exposure to Dutch may be placed in one of these phases. The Dutch primary teacher will discuss placement with the Dutch MYP/DP teachers.

We encourage advanced phase students to eventually progress to Dutch Language & Literature (DLL) / SSST Dutch A: Literature SL, even if it may be challenging.

Dutch (A: Language) Language & Literature (DLL) / SSST Dutch A: Literature SL (SSST DL)

Students who are fluent or nearly fluent (though not necessarily in writing) in Dutch will initially be placed in DLL/SSST DL. This class is for students who are native speakers of Dutch or who have had a lot of exposure to Dutch. This class is entirely in Dutch. As we recognize that many of our native Dutch students have never had secondary education in Dutch, special attention is paid to grammar, spelling, and writing.

How are students placed in the correct class and how is this evaluated?

Students who are new to the school will be initially placed according to their Language Profile. Returning students will be placed in conversation with their previous Dutch teacher.

All students will be evaluated in the fourth week to determine whether the placement is correct and additionally to find out the strengths and weaknesses of the students. This is done both informally, in conversation with the student, and formally, in the form of a language test.

5. What other language courses are offered at ISH?

All MYP students at ISH take English and Dutch. In addition, students take either French or Spanish. French and Spanish are only offered at the Language Acquisition level at ISH. These classes are not intended for mother tongue speakers. Mother tongue speakers of French or Spanish may be supported by language clubs offered after school.

All DP students take ELL / EL or English B and they can choose a second language from the ISH offering according to their level.

MYP 1

In MYP 1 the students have “taster lessons” in both French and Spanish at the start of the year to enable them to make a choice as to which language they would like to take. Students have free choice between French and Spanish but are encouraged to stay with their choices for the rest of their time at ISH.

MYP 2-5

MYP students entering ISH in later years who have studied one of these languages previously are encouraged to continue with this language. Students who enter ISH in later years but have never studied one of these languages are asked to make a choice and will be given a catch-up book to help them move quickly from Phase 1 to Phase 2 so that they can be on par with their classmates who have more experience in the language. For more information about how the phases work, see [section 6](#).

All MYP students at the International School of Haarlem study French or Spanish.

In special cases, the school may waive the requirement that the student take French or Spanish so that the student can be supported in other ways during those lesson times.

DP 1-2

DP students with knowledge of French or Spanish that exceeds the MYP phase 1 requirements, can take these languages as B languages. DP students who do not meet the requirements for French / Spanish B, are advised to consider French / Spanish ab initio SL.

6. How do the MYP phases work in Language Acquisition courses?

Our Language Acquisition (LA) / Language B / Language ab initio courses make use of phases. These phases do not correspond to ages but rather to development of skills in the target language. The phases may approximately match with the number of years the student has been studying the language.

Our classes may contain more than one phase. For example, a new student in MYP 2 who has never studied French will be in FLA Phase 1. However, this student's classmates may have progressed to Phase 2 already. In this case the student will be given a catch-up booklet.

One year of study may approximate one phase of language acquisition, but this can vary greatly. For example, a student who is a mother tongue Italian speaker may find that they can progress quickly through the phases in Spanish. Likewise, a mother tongue English speaker who plays on a local football team may be able to quickly progress through the phases in Dutch. The table below shows roughly what a student can do in Phases 1-4. Students in ELA or DLA in Phases 5-6 will transition to MYP / DP language and literature or DP literature courses.

Emergent communicator		Capable communicator	
Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
<p>Emergent communicators in phase 1 understand and respond to simple phrases, statements and questions.</p> <p>They identify basic messages, facts, opinions, feelings and ideas presented in oral, visual and written language, and demonstrate their comprehension in simple oral and written phrases.</p> <p>They convey basic information in a limited range of everyday situations, using oral and written language appropriate to a very limited range of interpersonal and cultural contexts. They begin to be aware that language use is connected to a purpose and an audience.</p>	<p>Emergent communicators in Phase 2 can do all of phase 1 plus additional depth.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -more communication on paper -easy sentence production -questions in assignments and assessments (mostly) in the target language -simple conjugations in present tense -basic reading and writing -using prepositions -basic past tense at the end of the phase -including verbs that make sense. 	<p>Capable communicators in phase 3 understand and respond to a limited variety of spoken and written texts.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -spontaneous (simple) dialogue -writing more accurately -expressing complex ideas with limited vocabulary -understanding is a key issue. Students understand concepts and can talk about them together. -most teacher language in target language 	<p>Capable communicators in phase 4 understand and respond to a variety of spoken and written texts.</p> <p>They interpret specific information, main ideas and some detail presented in complex oral, visual and written language, draw conclusions and recognize implied opinions and attitudes in texts read and viewed.</p> <p>They engage in conversation and write structured text to share informative and organized ideas on topics of personal interest and global significance, in a range of interpersonal and cultural contexts. They can communicate substantial information containing relevant and developed ideas and justified opinions on events, experiences and some concepts explored in class. They identify aspects of format and style, and speak and write with a clear sense of audience and purpose.</p>

The teacher will use their professional judgement to determine the proper phase of the students based on assessment tasks of increasing complexity. A student who consistently works within the level descriptor for a 6 in a phase has shown that they are proficient enough to progress. We strive to place students in the most appropriately academically challenging course.

7. How does the school encourage language, including mother tongue, development?

Though the working language of the school is English, we encourage students to express themselves in their mother tongue as well. Peer interaction at breaks, on field trips, and in team bonding outings provide chances for the students to develop as fluent users of multiple languages.

Though in the Netherlands clubs usually take place in the community, not in the school, ISH offers several after-school clubs that can contribute to the language development of the students. These clubs include language-specific clubs, debate, newspaper, bullet journaling, and more. In DP, students have also the opportunity to study their mother tongue / best language through the SSST Language A: Literature course.

In addition, our library, which is currently in development, features books in multiple languages. Currently the balance of books is in English and Dutch, with French and Spanish rounding out the collection. As our school continues to grow, we would like to increase this offering based on the wishes and tips of students and parents with a mother tongue other than English or Dutch. Families are asked to submit suggestions of books they'd like to see in our library.

Finally, we have various celebrations in school to encourage language participation, such as International Day, the Day of European Languages, Mother Tongue Day, and more. The languages department are currently developing a language calendar with further celebrations.

Works Cited

“Diploma Programme: From Principles into Practice.” International Baccalaureate Organization, 2015.

“Middle Years Programme Language Acquisition Guide.” International Baccalaureate Organization, 2017.