



Zhuhai International School Language Policy 2025

Period of Review: Annually

Reviewed by: Senior Leadership Team & Educational Leadership Team

Most Recent Review: February 2025

ZIS Language Policy

This policy document was written through the collaborative efforts of a team of language teachers, IB coordinators, and administrators with feedback from parents. ZIS is an IB World school. In writing this policy, the team consulted the Guidelines for developing a school language policy written by the IBO in addition to the guides that outline our curricular programmes (PYP, MYP, and DP) as well as the recommendations that came out of the evaluation visit for all three IB programmes in the spring of 2017. During the review cycle in 2019- 2020, the new Standards and Practices as well as the new MYP Language Acquisition Guide, were consulted to ensure that requirements therein were met.

Who we are

Zhuhai International School (ZIS) educates students aged 3-18 from around the world. Founded in 2007, it has maintained a family-oriented atmosphere. While a sizeable portion of our students have spent much of their childhood in the country, they hold passports from other nations. Students enter ZIS with a range of needs related to language.

What we believe

Language allows for creativity, expression and cultural understanding. Through language, we build relationships, share ideas and strengthen community. As an English-medium school, we promise to our stakeholders to build up English proficiency. As residents of China, it is our duty to better understand, appreciate and learn about our host-country's language, customs and characteristics. Studying Chinese allows us to do this. From Nursery through to the end of the Year 11, all students study our host language, Chinese. In the Diploma Program, students have the opportunity to continue with Chinese or to learn Spanish through the DP *Ab Initio* course.

At ZIS, we believe that language learning is directly linked to international-mindedness, open-mindedness, cultural awareness and global citizenship, each important concepts imbedded in the IB Continuum.

The ZIS Language Policy aims to reflect the school's mission statement:

At ZIS we strive to develop dynamic and principled global citizens who have the skills and attitudes to enable them to become compassionate, life-long learners who will contribute positively to the future of our world.

POLICY AIMS:

1. Outline our language goals
2. Reflect our IB Curricular Framework
3. Summarize our language practices
4. Outline how the curriculum allows for language development and works towards English language proficiency

1. LANGUAGE GOALS

We want ZIS students to:

- Reach the level of English proficiency needed to access our curriculum
- Have at least one academic language upon graduation with a focus placed on English
- Have the opportunity to learn (or continue learning) another language
- Value their home language and other languages used

2. IB Curricular Framework

As an IB World School, we recognize that all teachers whether they deliver the PYP, MYP or DP, are language teachers. In addition, Standard A. 7 clearly states that a school place, “importance on language learning, including mother tongue, host country language and other languages.” (Standards and Practices, 7). This standard drives the ZIS community to place a high value on English, the language of instruction, Chinese, the host language, and a student’s home language. In addition, “The ability to communicate in a variety of modes in more than one language is essential to the concept of an international education that promotes multilingualism and intercultural understanding, both of which are central to the IB’s mission.” (Language Acquisition Guide, 4)

Our Language Policy outlines how we promote, structure, deliver and encourage language learning to ensure our students truly become global citizens, able to create bridges across cultures through language.

3. LANGUAGE PRACTICES at ZIS

Our language practices reflect the underlying philosophies of the IBO. These practices include:

- A. Language Teaching and Learning
- B. English Language Acquisition
- C. Chinese Language Acquisition
- D. Additional Language Acquisition
- E. Validating Home Language
- F. Working in Consultation with Parents and Students

A. Language Teaching and Learning

WHOLE SCHOOL:

Structured, purposeful inquiry is the primary approach to all our teaching and learning. Language learning does not happen in isolation; it is a tool used to communicate, learn about culture and express oneself. In this end, language is taught through authentic use.

- Every teacher is a language teacher. Ongoing training focused on language learning allows teachers to assist their language learners in the mainstream classroom.
- Support for those students new to English is provided through Learning Services to assist teachers and work with second language learners both in and out of the classroom.
- Our teaching practice values collaboration, careful planning and differentiation.
- Assessment informs our teaching and learning.
- EAL needs are met throughout the differentiated teaching and learning process. (See *English Language Acquisition*)
- Students with exceptionalities are supported through the Learning Services department. If formally identified through an Educational Psychologist, they receive an IEP (Individual Education Plan). Those without formal identification receive a Student Learning Support Plan. Both are reviewed annually. Their needs are met throughout the differentiated teaching and learning process.
- We value contextualized and concept-based teaching; our content is presented in this manner

ZIS recognizes the importance of translanguaging as a pedagogical approach that allows students to use their full linguistic repertoire for learning. Teachers are encouraged to:

- Create opportunities for students to use all their languages as resources for learning
- Value and build upon students' existing language skills and knowledge
- Support the development of metalinguistic awareness across languages
- Design learning experiences that allow for fluid movement between languages

Early Years

Primary School

Secondary School

<p>A significant focus in EY is placed on exploration, learning routine and play-based learning. This provides all students with a safe environment in which to learn language.</p>	<p>The Primary School has adopted the Common Core curriculum to inform their English language instruction. In conjunction with the PYP Language Scope and Sequence, the CC Standards are taught using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the six transdisciplinary themes • concept-based learning • the inquiry cycle <p>These same three elements underpin Chinese language instruction.</p>	<p>In the MYP, students are taught English and Chinese in classes that meet their language needs. To allow for multiple levels, students work with another grade level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade 6 and 7 • Grade 8 and 9 <p>Students in Grade 10 are not in combined classes in order to make ePortfolios and eAssessment manageable.</p>
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		<p>We offer three levels of language learning in the MYP, which are typically divided in this manner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 1-2 (emergent) • Phase 3-4 (capable) • Language and Literature (proficient) <p>Variations can be made if a grade group has different needs (for example, combining Phases 2-3 and 4-5).</p> <p>In the DP, language classes offer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English/Chinese Language Acquisition • English/Chinese Lang. and Lit. • Spanish <i>Ab initio</i>
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B. English Language Acquisition

WHOLE SCHOOL:

The language of instruction at ZIS is English; this places a priority on English language learning from the onset. We recognize that:

- Students who are new to an English environment must be made to feel comfortable and secure as quickly as possible. As a result, English language learning must first focus on practical use and immediate needs.
- Language learning does not happen in isolation; emphasis is placed on learning language in a suitable context and with peers as much as possible.
- Specialized support is vital for children who join in the older grades as they encounter more sophisticated content while navigating a new language.
- ZIS prizes inclusion but must allow for an appropriate balance of language needs to give the best chance for students to access a demanding curriculum.

Early Years	Primary School	Secondary School
Classroom teachers, in conjunction with Learning Service teachers, establish a plan	Classroom teachers, in conjunction with Learning Service teachers, establish a plan	Students are assessed during the admissions process to determine if they have enough English

<p>for students requiring extra English language assistance.</p> <p>Classroom teachers support EAL learners via differentiation of tasks in the homeroom classes.</p>	<p>for students requiring extra English language assistance.</p> <p>EAL learners receive support based on their English level through our EAL program. This is divided into 2 groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EAL1: for students who are new to English • EAL 2: for students who are working toward greater proficiency and reintegration in their regular classroom. <p>Additional small group English-focused learning occurs when the mainstream classroom is studying Chinese as the emphasis is first place on English language acquisition.</p> <p>Learning Services Teachers provide push in support when working in the regular classroom for our EAL and exceptional students.</p> <p>Class teachers support EAL learners via differentiation of tasks in the homeroom classes.</p>	<p>to meet the needs of our program. (See <i>Admissions</i>)</p> <p>All secondary students are enrolled in the English class that best meets their needs and level.</p> <p>Language acquisition in the MYP is organized into six phases of language learning. While these phases represent a developmental continuum, students may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin their language study at any phase according to their background and proficiency level • Progress through phases at different rates • Exit from any phase when proficiency indicators suggest they are ready • Spend different amounts of time within each phase depending on their language development needs • Be in different phases for different language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) <p>Phase placement and progression decisions are based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language proficiency profiles developed through assessment • Evidence of skills across all four language domains • Ongoing formative assessment data • Student language learning background • Consultation between language teachers,
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		<p>coordinators and learning support staff"</p> <p>Fluent speakers are enrolled into <i>Language and Literature (LL)</i>. This course is designed to allow for the study of literature as well as important contextual elements. Students who are still mastering the language are placed into <i>Language Acquisition (LA)</i> and placed in the Language Acquisition phase that best suits their needs. This is determined through testing as well as through teacher observation. The English teachers, with the support from the Head of Learning Services, work together to make the best decision for each child with regards to placement and movement up the phases and into LL.</p> <p>EAL learners receive support based on their English level through our EAL program. This is divided into 2 groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• EAL1: for students who are new to English• EAL 2: for students who are working toward greater proficiency and
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		<p>reintegration in their regular classroom.</p> <p>The EAL class is scheduled while the remainder of the grade is in <i>Individuals and Societies</i>, a language-heavy subject.</p> <p>Push-in support is provided in Grades 6-8 based on the availability of Learning Services teachers for those students who have not yet achieved fluency in English.</p> <p>All subject teachers support those students who have not reached English fluency through differentiated instruction, assessment, resources and visual material to allow them to access the curriculum presented in each subject area. Examples of this include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vocabulary lists• Differentiated tasks• Differentiated teaching• Visual aids• Support on <i>Toddle</i> <p>Apart from differentiated teaching and learning, there is no additional support in Grades 9-12</p>
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C. Chinese Language Acquisition

WHOLE SCHOOL:

ZIS's primary additional language is Chinese, our host country. In recognizing that language is a bridge to understanding another culture, we believe that all students should be able to learn and strengthen Chinese.

We recognize that:

- Students enrolled at ZIS have a wide variety of Chinese proficiency; we ensure that all levels of Chinese language acquisition and strengthening are present
- Proficiency is not tied to citizenship – students who are not native to China are just as capable of joining the fluent classes as those who were born here.
- Chinese language instruction is in keeping with our IB philosophies and not necessarily a reflection of what is happening in other schools in the area
- Our fluent speakers will not have as much time dedicated to Chinese learning as their counterparts in other schools as we are not a bilingual school.

Early Years	Primary School	Secondary School
<p>Chinese co-teachers teach Chinese through play-based learning. In Nursery, lessons are 15-20 minutes long. In Reception, lessons are 45 minutes long.</p> <p>Throughout the day, EY children are exposed to Chinese through interactions with their peers and through interactions with their Chinese co-teachers and Educational Assistants.</p>	<p>Each class has one foreign teacher and one Chinese teacher. This promotes a natural language-rich environment.</p> <p>Chinese lessons in Primary are based on levels of proficiency.</p> <p>Daily targeted Chinese lessons span 45 minutes.</p> <p>To permit various levels at all grade levels, students are grouped:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● KG and Grade 1 ● Grades 2 and 3 ● Grades 4 and 5 <p>Within these groups, there are two classes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chinese for Fluent speakers ● Chinese as an Additional Language <p>Differentiation plays a significant role as each group still has an extensive range of proficiency levels.</p> <p>An exception is given to students new to English as that time can be used to further develop English proficiency before joining the Chinese lessons.</p>	<p>All secondary students are enrolled in the Chinese class that best meets their needs and level. We offer three levels of Chinese in the MYP program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 1-2 (emergent) • Phase 3-4 (capable) • Language and Literature (proficient) <p>Variations can occur if a grade group has different needs (for example, combining Phases 2-3 and 4-5).</p> <p>Digital Learning Integration:</p> <p>The Chinese language programme incorporates digital tools and platforms to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide authentic language learning experiences ● Enable individualized practice and feedback ● Support character recognition and writing ● Create opportunities for interaction with Chinese speakers ● Develop digital citizenship in Chinese language contexts

D. Additional Language Acquisition

WHOLE SCHOOL:

We only offer one additional language, other than Chinese and English, at the DP level.

Early Years	Primary School	Secondary School
		<p>In the DP, it is recommended that all students continue with their English instruction, regardless of level.</p> <p>To be awarded the full IB DP Diploma, students must study one language at the Language and Literature level. This allows for a choice in Language Acquisition.</p> <p>Those who feel their Chinese is not strong enough can opt to study <i>an Ab initio</i> language on the Pamoja platform at an additional cost. These courses are designed for students new to a language and are only offered at the <i>Standard Level</i>.</p>

E. Validating Home Language

WHOLE SCHOOL:

Students are encouraged to maintain their home language, culture, and customs. A strong language base allows students to express themselves clearly and provides links and support to their language acquisition.

ZIS maintains a collection of language media and encourages parents to share resources with each other and the school through our school library.

ACTIVE MOTHER TONGUE SUPPORT:

ZIS is committed to the active development of mother tongue languages through:

- Dedicated time and space for mother tongue study after school in collaboration with parents
- Parent partnerships to support home language development
- Celebration of linguistic diversity through cultural events
- Integration of home languages in classroom learning where possible
- Support for external mother tongue examination preparation where available.

F. Admissions

WHOLE SCHOOL:

Part of the admission process is to consult with parents and students and determine the student's language profile:

- Languages spoken and proficiency in speaking, reading, writing
- English exposure and proficiency
- Language needs

At this time, the principals and head of the school must be consulted to know how and to what extent the school will be able or unable to meet the students' needs and help the students reach their language goals.

Parents are asked to produce any relevant documents that outline if their child(ren) has an exceptionality.

Parents are asked to seek support and an Ed—psych assessment through Olivia's Place or a similar organization if an exceptionality is obvious.

Early Years

Primary School

Secondary School

<p>In Early Years, a trial day is set up to allow teachers to observe a potential new student. Observations are shared with the Educational Leadership Team and the Student Support Services Team.</p> <p>Consideration is given to all students based on classroom availability, learning needs and prior school placements.</p> <p>At this age, it is often hard to see if a student may have an additional learning need.</p>	<p>In the Primary School, a trial day is set up to allow teachers to observe a potential new student. Observations are shared with the Educational Leadership Team and the Student Support Services Team.</p> <p>Consideration is given to all students based on classroom availability, learning needs and prior school placements.</p> <p>A DRA assessment is administered soon after enrolment to provide a baseline of English ability.</p>	<p>In the DP, it is recommended that all students continue with their English instruction, regardless of level.</p> <p>To be awarded the full IB DP Diploma, students must study one language at the Language and Literature level. This allows for a choice in Language Acquisition.</p> <p>Those who feel their Chinese is not strong enough can opt to study <i>Spanish Ab initio</i>. This course is designed for students new to the language and is only offered at the <i>Standard Level</i> via the online platform Pamoja at an additional cost.</p>
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G. Working with Parents

WHOLE SCHOOL:

Parents are given feedback on language learning through regular reporting in all school divisions and through Learning Services if their child is receiving additional support.

Through our school Learning Management System, Toddle, parents can follow their child(ren)'s progress and events and activities related to all areas of learning within the school.

Through parent workshops, our community can learn more about our language requirements.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT and the ZIS CURRICULUM

Nursery to Reception: IB Primary Years Programme

Early Years students study English, our language of instruction, and Chinese, the language of our host country.

KG to Grade 5: IB Primary Years Programme

Primary School students study English, our language of general instruction.

If the student is proficient in English, they will have the opportunity to learn a new language: Chinese, the language of our host country.

If the student needs help to become more proficient in English, they will be assessed to join Learning Support classes. This involves special classes, either EAL 1 or EAL 2, designed to help with speaking, listening, reading, and writing. These classes are periodically assessed so students can move from phase to phase as their teachers see progression. Each phase is offered at every grade level.

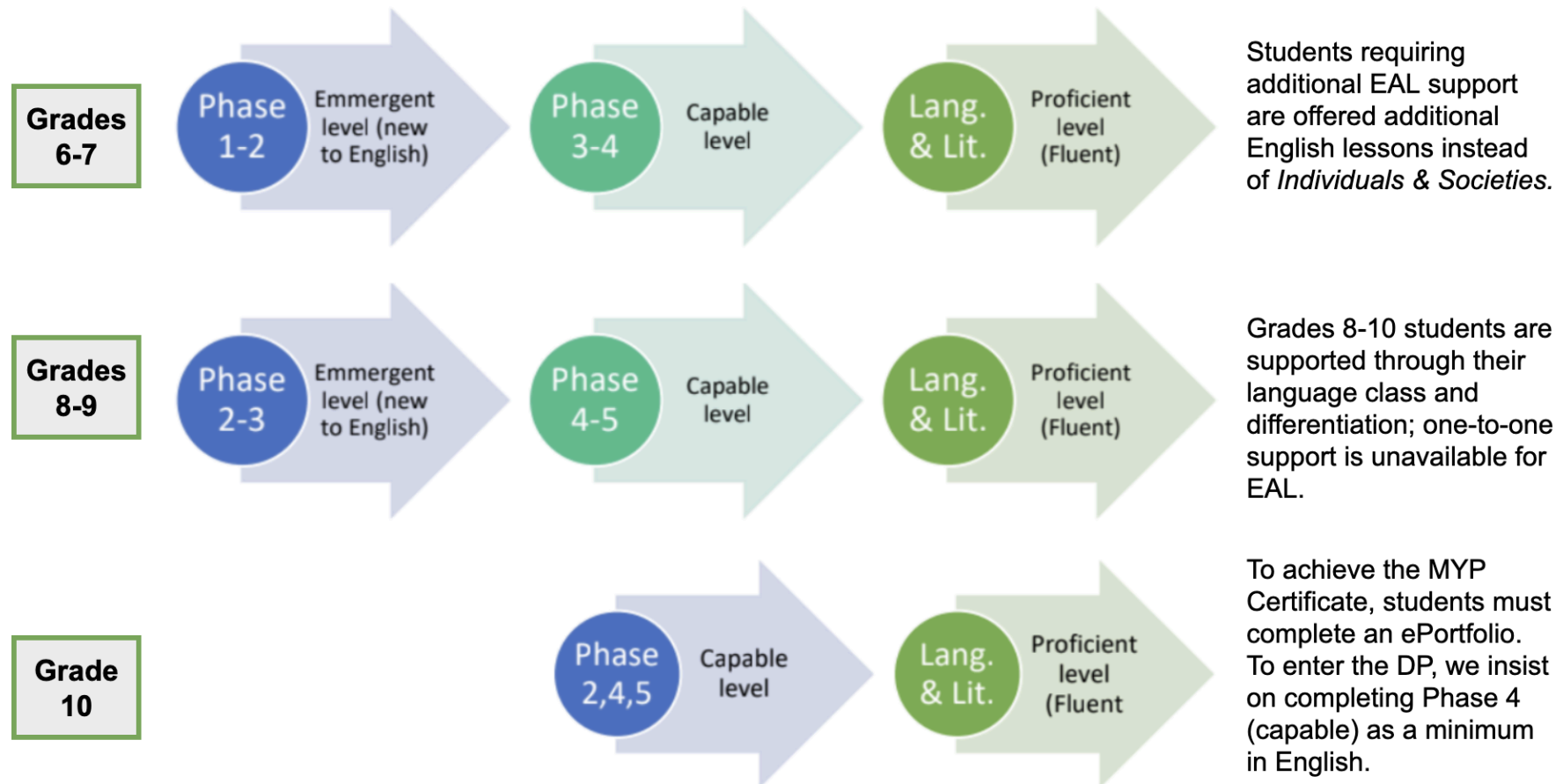


Students who need additional learning support will be placed in an alternate learning support class. They will either be Pull Outs, where the student/s has one-on-one or small group instruction, or Push Ins, where the student/s is supported within the classroom learning environment.

These classes are offered in every grade level. These classes are designed to produce fluent English communicators (oral and written communication).

Year 7 to Year 11: IB Middle Years Programme

English is the language of instruction and is studied by all students. In addition, students continue to study Chinese as an additional language, with various language choices at different levels according to demand. Students are enrolled in either Language or Literature or Language Acquisition (measured in Phases 1 - beginner or emergent, to Phase 6 - proficient). The IB does not see English and Chinese as separate subjects but rather as *Language and Literature* and *Language Acquisition* and the means by which to differentiate language instructions, regardless of which language is selected by the school.



ZIS organizes the Language Acquisition classes into the phases that best support the students' language growth, ensure their language level allows them to access the curriculum and provide a maximum opportunity for progress from MYP to the DP. The groupings depicted above are a typical breakdown. Flexibility is possible if different phases present themselves.

Students move up from phase to phase as their teachers see progression. Each phase is equivalent to approximately one year of instruction. Typically, the lower phases are more prevalent in the younger year groups (Grades 6 to 8), and the higher phases are more prevalent in the older year groups (Grades 9 and 10).

In Grade 10, students must be able to access the curriculum without additional EAL support to allow us to ascertain that they can manage the full DP upon the completion of the MYP.

Grades 11 and 12: IB Diploma Programme

The Diploma Programme allows a broader choice of language study. English is studied plus one other language, with a choice at different levels according to demand. Students must have enough English to access the course, so no EAL support exists.

Languages are studied within two broad groups: Studies in Language and Literature and Language Acquisition. To achieve a full IB DP diploma, students must study at least one language at the Language and Literature level.

Language Acquisition

- **English:** Standard Level or Higher Level
- **Chinese:** Standard Level or Higher Level
- **Spanish *Ab initio*:** Standard Level

Language and Literature

- **English:** Standard Level or Higher Level
- **Chinese:** Standard Level or Higher Level

POLICY REVIEW

This policy document will be reviewed annually to ensure that it is current and relevant to the changing needs and dynamics of the school. After each review, the policy document will be shared with staff through staff orientation and division meetings explicitly devoted to language acquisition and language needs at ZIS.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Ab initio	A language course option in the DP. This course is designed for students with no prior knowledge of the language to be studied and is only available at the Standard Level.
Diploma Programme (DP)	Aimed at students aged 16-18 years old, "the programme aims to develop students who have excellent breadth and depth of knowledge – students who flourish physically, intellectually, emotionally and ethically." (IBO)
Early Years	Students can be enrolled in Pre-K1 at the age of 3. Students typically progress from Pre-K2 to Kindergarten at 4 or 5 years of age.
English as an Additional Language (EAL)	The process of acquiring English in addition to another language(s) used at home or within communities outside school.
Higher Level (HL)	Most courses in the Diploma Programme are available at the Higher Level. Students must pick 3 of their 6 course options at the Higher Level to obtain the full IB DP diploma. HL courses cover more content and skills, requiring more class hours.
Language Acquisition (LA)	An MYP and DP Language course aimed at students who have not yet reached fluency. In the MYP, this course is divided into 6 Phases, with Phase 1 being for complete beginners and Phase 6 acting as a bridge with the Language and Literature course.
Language and Literature (LL)	MYP and DP Language course aimed at fluent speakers/readers/writers. This course teaches students how to analyze literary texts and understand the importance of context, stylistic choices, proper formatting and presentation.

Middle Years Programme (MYP)	Aimed at students in grades 6 to 10, The Middle Years Programme is "a challenging framework that encourages students to make practical connections between their studies and the real world; the MYP is inclusive by design; students of all interests and academic abilities can benefit from their participation." (IBO)
Phases	A total of 6 phases make up the Language Acquisition programme in the MYP; each phase is roughly equal to a year of instruction, although this is flexible enough to allow for more or less time depending on student needs. Phase 1 is for those who are true beginners (emergent), Phases 3 and 4 are for those students who have studied the language for a few years (capable) and Phases 5 and 6 are for those who will be able to move on to Language and Literature (proficient) upon completion. As outlined in the MYP Language Acquisition Guide, students must have the opportunity to study an additional language long enough to complete Phase 4 by the end of the MYP. For more details, please reference the Phase-specific language acquisition objectives outlined on pages 11-14 in From Principles into Practice.
Primary Years Programme (PYP)	Aimed at students in Early Years through to the end of Year 6, the "PYP prepares students to become active, caring, lifelong learners who demonstrate respect for themselves and others and have the capacity to participate in the world around them. It focuses on the development of the whole child." (IBO)
Primary School	Follows the PYP. Students enter in Year 1 and finish in Year 6. Students are typically 10-11 years old upon completing Grade 5.
Secondary School	Made up of 2 separate programmes: MYP (Year 7-11) and DP (Year 12-13)
Standard Level (SL)	All courses in the Diploma Programme are available at the Standard Level. Students may choose up to 3 of their 6 course options at the Standard Level to obtain the full IB DP diploma. SL courses cover the standard scope of content and skills and require fewer class hours than the Higher Level (HL) classes.
Toddle	A specialized learning management system designed for IB schools that integrates curriculum planning, assessment, reporting and school-home communication in one platform, with features including real-time learning updates, resource sharing,

	attendance tracking, and a mobile app for convenient access by teachers, students and parents.
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