

# Language Policy

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## INTRODUCTION

The Canadian International School of Hefei (CISH) is a certified institution within the International Baccalaureate Continuum and is committed to fostering and supporting multilingualism within an inquiry-based educational framework.

## OVERVIEW

CISH acknowledges that language is a cornerstone of both our institution's and our students' cultural identities. The school subscribes to the concept of 'translanguaging,' defined as a method wherein students leverage their complete linguistic repertoires for effective communication and meaning-making (García, O.). CISH bears the responsibility of nurturing language skills to ensure students can fully engage in the academic program, social activities, and individual development. Collaboration among parents, teachers, and students is crucial for the continuous development of linguistic abilities at CISH. Language is a key facilitator of communication, critical thinking, and



conceptual understanding, as outlined in "Making the PYP Happen," "MYP: From Principles Into Practice," and "DP: From Principles Into Practice." Students' progress rates are influenced by their diverse language backgrounds, experiences, and skills. CISH aspires for all students to be proficient in at least two languages.

## THE CISH COMMUNITY LANGUAGE PROFILE

Languages Used in the school community	
Languages of teaching and learning	Language and Literature: English, Mandarin, German, Korean, French, Spanish, and Portuguese  Language Acquisition: English, Mandarin, Spanish and German  Language Ab Initio: Mandarin (for students who have been studying Mandarin for less than three years)
Languages used for official school communication	English, Mandarin, and Korean
Home Languages and other languages used in the school community	Korean, Romanian, Russian, Persian, Japanese, Cantonese, Indonesian, Thai, Afrikaans, Mandarin, Spanish, French, German, Hindi, Kannada, Vietnamese, Urdu, Tagalog, Dutch, Arabic, and Portuguese

Language Education Logistics	
Referencing protocols and Preferred works cited style	MLA

## TEACHING AND LANGUAGE LEARNING PRACTICES

CISH affirms that "Learning to communicate in various ways in more than one language is central to the development of intercultural understanding in the IB" (From Principles into Practice, 12). Consequently, all subject teachers are designated as language educators and are accountable for language development as per the IB Program Standards and Practices (2020) (Approaches to teaching 5.4: Teachers support language development with consideration for the language profiles of students. (0403-05-0400)).

Upon enrollment, each student will complete a language survey to ascertain their linguistic background. Subsequent language assessments will be performed to identify each student's individual linguistic requirements.

In classrooms where the language of instruction differs from the student's home language, accommodations may include but are not limited to the following:



- Incorporating visuals and descriptive gestures alongside verbal explanations.
- Peer support, such as translation assistance within the classroom.
- Advanced access to reading materials.
- Provision of scaffolded handouts and graphic organizers.
- Adapted or modified summative assessments.
- Regular progress tracking through conferences and comprehension checks.
- Additional time allocation for task completion.
- Use of language aids like dictionaries or translators, when suitable.
- Structured opportunities for peer feedback and collaboration.
- Various formative and summative assessments to showcase learning diversity.
- Support in utilizing the home language, when appropriate.
- Target language exposure through diverse mediums such as books, films, video games, television shows, articles, and music.
- Encouragement for the adoption of a growth mindset towards language acquisition.

These differentiated practices are also available to students without language-specific learning needs. For more information, refer to our Inclusion Policy.

## **TRANSLANGUAGING**

CISH regards the development of translanguaging as critical not only for cognitive development but also for the preservation of personal and cultural identity. In alignment with IB philosophies, CISH commits to facilitating the ongoing development of home languages, thereby enhancing students' agency in both communication and learning.

## **HOME LANGUAGE SUPPORT**

CISH provides a myriad of informal opportunities to honor and advance home-language development. These include, but are not limited to:

- Availability of home language texts, visuals, and resources in the CISH library.
- Translation dictionaries accessible in language classes and the CISH library.
- The introduction of after-school language clubs.
- Digital tools such as online resources and iPad applications to aid home-language growth.
- Multilingual correspondence with parents in English, Mandarin, and Korean.
- Employing translators proficient in Korean, German, Mandarin, French, and Spanish.
- Offering parents strategies and resources to support home language development.
- Incorporating the diverse languages and cultures of our community into the curriculum to encourage international-mindedness.



## LIBRARY SUPPORT OF LANGUAGE LEARNING

The CISH library underscores the pivotal role of language in students' intellectual, social, and emotional development. To this end, the teacher-librarian collaborates closely with language educators to curate a comprehensive selection of texts in multiple languages, including English, Mandarin, Spanish, German, French, and Korean.

Teacher-librarians at CISH are committed to the following initiatives:

- Expanding CISH's collection to include works by international authors and texts in multiple languages.
- Promoting and facilitating the reading of diverse voices.
- Regularly consulting students and parents to gather feedback on library program development, new collection additions, and home-language support resources.
- Collaborating with non-English speakers to offer programs in a variety of home languages.
- Displaying signage in the home languages of the CISH community to enhance navigability within the library.

### CISH EAL Program (PYP & MYP)

As part of the admissions procedure at CISH, all applicants whose primary language is not English undergo WIDA (World-Class Instructional Design & Assessment) testing. Students not meeting the grade-level benchmarks will receive targeted support via the CISH EAL program.

In the EAL environment, the medium of instruction is English, although translanguaging strategies are also utilized to optimize the learning experiences of EAL students.

### CISH EAL & WIDA PROFICIENCY LEVELS:

- **Level 1 (Emerging/Beginning):** The student is at the initial stages of English language learning. Scheduled language support blocks provide direct EAL support.
- **Level 2 (Developing):** The student communicates in basic English with frequent grammatical errors and a restricted vocabulary. Direct EAL support is required in scheduled language support blocks.
- **Level 3 (Expanding):** The student can articulate ideas in English with occasional grammatical errors. They require support in content language and academic vocabulary development. Their proficiency in English qualifies them for enrollment in the Language Acquisition course (MYP). Direct EAL support is needed in scheduled language support blocks.
- **Level 4 (Consolidating/Proficient):** The student has sufficient proficiency in English for enrollment in either Language Acquisition or Language and Literature courses (MYP). EAL support is provided on an as-needed basis.

### WIDA (World-Class Instructional Design & Assessment)

WIDA assessments are administered both during the admissions process and bi-annually in early December and late May. Students who meet the necessary benchmarks will transition to the language arts classroom (PYP) or will no longer require EAL support (MYP).



CISH is a member of the WIDA International School Consortium, which comprises over 400 schools across more than 100 countries.

## **PRIMARY YEARS PROGRAMME (PYP)**

### **ENGLISH AS THE LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION**

Our teachers are committed to fostering a caring and inclusive learning environment that caters to individual learning styles and capabilities. This environment ensures the success of each student. To further language development, teachers engage in collaborative efforts with colleagues and specialists.

### **ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL)**

During the Early Years, all incoming students undergo informal assessments to identify their English language proficiency. For students in Grades 1-5 whose home language is not English, formal assessments are conducted. Those who require additional language support are placed in EAL classes. EAL instructors collaborate closely with homeroom teachers to offer two levels of language instruction: EAL Beginner and EAL Intermediate. After successful evaluation, students transition from EAL classes to standard English Language Arts courses. The EAL program aims to serve as a temporary support bridge for emergent language learners.

### **MANDARIN AS HOST COUNTRY LANGUAGE**

Recognizing Mandarin as the predominant home language of our student body, CISH provides daily Mandarin instruction. Courses are categorized into three levels: Beginner, Intermediate, and Language Arts. At the end of each academic year, students are encouraged to take the YCT/HSK test.

## **MIDDLE YEARS PROGRAMME (MYP)**

### **ROLE OF LANGUAGE ACROSS SUBJECTS**

In the MYP, language is not just a subject; it's a cross-disciplinary medium of learning and communication. Consistent with IB philosophy, all teachers, regardless of subject, are effectively language educators. They contribute to building language skills integral to inquiry-based learning and critical thinking.

### **LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE VS. LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

Students in the MYP are classified into either the 'Language and Literature' track (Language A) or the 'Language Acquisition' track (Language B), depending on their language proficiency. Various literacy skills, such as reading comprehension, acquisition of academic vocabulary, and effective communication, are integrated across units of inquiry.

### **ASSESSMENT AND PLACEMENT**

Citing modern research, such as Peterson's 2008 study published by the IB, it may take additional language learners up to seven years to achieve academic language proficiency comparable to their native-language peers. Therefore, assessment at enrollment is crucial. This assessment, along with teachers' professional judgments and student interviews, guides the placement of a student in either Language and Literature or Language Acquisition courses.



## **MANDARIN AS HOST COUNTRY LANGUAGE**

The MYP program places a significant emphasis on the host country's language and culture. While the focus is on language proficiency, we also value cultural literacy. This is promoted through a diverse range of academic and extracurricular activities. School staff are also encouraged to participate in school-sponsored Mandarin classes.

## **DIPLOMA PROGRAMME (DP)**

### **LANGUAGE COURSE OFFERINGS**

Grades 11 & 12 in the DP aim to provide a diversified language education. Students have the opportunity to either continue with their home language, add another language to their academic repertoire, or embark on learning a new language altogether. Eligibility for specific courses depends on meeting the criteria outlined in CISH's Admission and Promotion Policy.

### **LANGUAGE A AND LANGUAGE B**

All DP students at CISH must complete two language courses: one from Group 1 (Language A), which focuses on in-depth study and appreciation of language and literature; and one from Group 2 (Language B), which is oriented towards language acquisition and cultural understanding.

### **BILINGUAL DIPLOMA**

Students who successfully complete their Language A course in a language other than English are eligible to graduate with a Bilingual Diploma, which acknowledges multilingual competence and cross-cultural literacy.

### **ANNUAL REVIEW**

CISH conducts an annual review of the range of language courses offered, thereby ensuring the curriculum remains responsive to the needs and aspirations of our diverse student body.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND RESOURCES**

To ensure the effective implementation of our language policy, CISH allocates dedicated time at the beginning of each academic year for staff discussions centered on language teaching and the review of crucial IB documents. Professional development sessions are accessible to all staff members, including administrators, teachers, and teacher-librarians.

### **EXPERTISE AND COLLABORATION**

When deemed necessary, CISH will consult both internal and external specialists in language education, such as IB Workshop leaders, to enrich our professional development programs. This collaborative approach underscores our commitment to continuous improvement in language teaching methodologies and curricula.

### **RESOURCE ALLOCATION**

CISH is committed to providing both material and human resources to foster language teaching and learning. This encompasses staff training, scheduled collaboration time, and an array of physical and virtual resources tailored to meet the pedagogical needs of our language programs.

## **ALIGNMENT WITH IB PRINCIPLES**



## COMMUNICATION

Our language policy mirrors the IB Learner Profile attribute of effective communication. By requiring students to acquire proficiency in an additional language beyond their home language, we encourage broader communication opportunities.

## HOLISTIC EDUCATION

The language policy at CISH aligns with the IB's holistic educational philosophy by honoring and integrating the diverse linguistic backgrounds and knowledge of our students and community.

## GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

Finally, our language policy fosters international-mindedness by encouraging collaboration across cultural and national boundaries, thereby facilitating an understanding of alternative, global, and current perspectives.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY AND LANGUAGE POLICY

Our language policy complements our academic integrity policy by supporting students in utilizing their home language for learning wherever possible. This practice minimizes the risk of academic dishonesty, as students may otherwise resort to copying text from English-only sources during research. We offer specific support for English Language Learners in this context, taking into account possible cultural variations in understanding academic honesty.

## ASSESSMENT POLICY AND LANGUAGE POLICY

The language policy at CISH is in harmony with our assessment policy, as both are universally applicable to our diverse student body. The assessment policy incorporates flexibility to account for situations where a student's limited vocabulary may affect the effective communication of their understanding.

## INCLUSION POLICY AND LANGUAGE POLICY

Aligned with our inclusion policy, the language policy aims to ensure that all students can fully access the curriculum based on their individual capabilities.

## ADMISSIONS POLICY AND LANGUAGE POLICY

Our language policy is congruent with our admissions guidelines, stating clear language requirements for incoming students. We welcome students of all linguistic backgrounds at CISH and offer specialized programs, such as EAL, to accommodate varying language proficiencies.

## LANGUAGE POLICY REVIEW

The CISH Language Policy is a living document, recognizing that language is fluid and ever-changing. In alignment with this dynamism, the policy requires a comprehensive review every two years. This review will be conducted by the school's pedagogical leadership team. Proposed updates, whether they arise from new academic research, updates in foundational documents, or insights into improving policy effectiveness, will be communicated to the school community for input. This consultation process will include teachers, parents, students (where appropriate), and members of the directorate or board.

*Note: The latest review of this policy was carried out in September 2023.*



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