

Language Policy

MISSION:

Learning to Make a Difference

VISION:

At the International School of Havana we focus together on our core work of learning, creating a powerful, positive learning culture framed by a common learning language and shared principles. We discover how to learn and how to help others learn. Acknowledging that everyone is different, we not only embrace and celebrate our differences, but also learn from our diversity. Every member of our community has something to offer that can make a difference, to ourselves, to each other, to our community and, ultimately, to the shared world beyond our school. At the International School of Havana we all learn with a common purpose. We learn to make a difference!

RATIONALE & LANGUAGE PROFILE

- The language of instruction for all subjects, apart other languages, is English. English is also our language of inclusion.
- ISH students are expected develop proficiency in English as well as to learn a second or additional language.
- ISH recognizes that some students require support with English as an additional language in order to access the curriculum and reach their full potential.
- The demographics for both our student body and academic staff are diverse with approximately 60 nationalities represented at the time of writing. The language profile of students is similarly diverse: As Spanish is the language of our host country, many students have Spanish as their Mother Tongue, 40% are native speakers of other languages and some students are native English speakers.
- ISH recognizes that language learning plays an important role in developing internationally-minded global perspectives through understanding and respecting other cultures.

PRINCIPLES

- Language is essential as a foundation for learning and language acquisition and development must start as early as possible.
- Development of a students mother tongue is essential and we seek to provide opportunities for this development, further, that literacy in at least one language is vital for all students to reach their full potential,

- All teachers are language teachers.
- All teachers support EAL learners with a variety of techniques in lessons, and support the integration of EAL learning throughout the curriculum.
- English as the language of instruction is a major attractor of families to the school. ISH is the only English Language school in Cuba.

AIMS & GOALS

- To provide high quality learning in the language of instruction and additional language learning in Spanish or French.
- To provide opportunities for children to value and celebrate their mother tongue as well as to recognize the importance of language diversity internationally.
- To provide a supportive and stimulating language learning environment for all students.
- To provide EAL learning support for all students who need it, giving learning opportunities for students new to English.
- To Promote English as a major attractor to the school.

LANGUAGE USE

- In the classroom: the language of instruction for all classes apart from studies in other languages, is English. It is expected that students communicate in English to build their academic fluency and as the language of inclusion. However, where needed, other languages may be used to support students' learning.
- Outside of the classroom: students are free to communicate with their peers in any language they have in common provided that the use of language is consistent with the principles of respectfulness and inclusiveness.
- The school uses British English for official communication. However, due to the international nature of our community, all English variants are considered acceptable provided that it's use is consistent.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

- To deliver a high quality programme of studies in English for all students, in all grades: EY to 12.
- To identify English language learning needs in order to foster successful language development through the academic programme, as described in the ISH Student Support Policy.
- To provide EAL support for all students who need it.
- To provide Spanish and French mother tongue programmes, as part of the curriculum and where feasible.

- To provide Spanish and French as additional language programmes as part of the curriculum.
- To support other languages represented within the ISH community by providing mother tongue and additional languages within the Co-curricular programme where possible.

EXPECTATIONS

- All academic staff should be aware of ISH's language policy and support its implementation.
- All staff are clear on the expectation that language of instruction is the language used by teachers and students in class and at other teaching times.
- New staff are provided with the policy as one of the initial documents they receive about ISH.
- All members of staff recognize the importance of language learning and of working within school policy, assuming the responsibility of language development for all members of our community: this includes modelling language usage and maintaining high standards of communication. All staff members, including administrative and support staff, will be supported in improving their language proficiency in English.
- With the exception of English, second language or Language B in the IGCSE and DP, EAL is seen as temporary intervention, and not as a separate subject. The intention is for emergent English learners to become sufficiently proficient in the use of English to be able to function in mainstream English-medium education throughout the school and in First Language English courses by Secondary.
- On occasion, students have the opportunity to study English as a second language on a case-by-case basis.
- For students in Grades 1 to 8, any decision should be made in consultation with the teachers, the relevant Coordinator and the relevant Section Principal. In the IGCSE and IB Diploma programmes at least one language must be studied at a first language level. As the language of instruction for subjects across these programmes is English, most students are expected to study the English A/First Language course, enabling them to access the curriculum in other subjects fully.
- Should it be considered appropriate for a student to study English B/Second Language, the decision should be made in consultation with the English department, the EAL department as/when required, the relevant Coordinator and the Secondary School Principal.
- The Director has final approval of all decisions.