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1. Philosophy

Language is used as a means to facilitate communication across the barriers of culture. People have a desire to interact with each other through language, which is fundamental in the preservation of cultural identity and the understanding between different nations and cultures. At the International School Almere we encourage the students to value, appreciate and enjoy using language through listening, reading, writing and speaking as a vehicle for further academic growth. The language of communication in the school is English, and we believe that mother tongue development is the foundation for further language acquisition and personal growth.

2. Aims

We aim to:

- Create an appreciation and enjoyment of language.
- Help students develop the skills to effectively speak, read, write, listen and ultimately learn with purpose and confidence across a wide range of contexts.
- Develop the skills to recognize and choose language which is appropriate to different situations.
- Enable students to integrate into the local community through learning Dutch as an additional language and by studying its culture in the MYP.

3. Agreements

As teachers we agree that:

- all teachers are language teachers in our school
- we provide a secure environment in which students feel free to express themselves
- we recognize the needs of students working in a language other than their mother tongue, by providing diverse educational opportunities to reach all learners
- We will always make students active learners, fostering inquiry and promoting real life applications to use the language
- We will support students' actual development and will act as facilitators who guide them to reach their potential
- We will differentiate when assessing students' work to provide meaningful tasks and assessments for all students considering all levels and abilities.

All students are encouraged to:

- maintain and value their own native language and to value the native language of other students.
- become fluent in more than one language.
- express themselves orally and in writing, in a variety of media and situations.
- read and interpret a broad range of literature reflecting a variety of cultures.
- explore language through arts.
- to view language as a tool for learning.

“Identity language” agreements:

At school we have experienced that the term “mother tongue” cannot be applied to all our students. Many of them speak and write a variety of languages at home, and this situation makes it difficult to decide what their mother tongue is. We have asked students in which language they feel most comfortable with, and for that reason we chose for the term “Identity language”.

- A language profile is created for each child that includes the first language of the student, list of experiences the child has had to foster his/her identity language. This is included in our admission procedure.
- To provide with resources to foster the identity language.
- To advise and/or encourage all who learn in a language other than their own, to always have a dictionary at hand, or use translation apps in class for the first few months.
- To develop opportunities for after school clubs (school supervised, self-taught, or externally taught) first language instruction. After school clubs such as Spanish “Club de lectura” is one example of opportunities that are provided for students with Spanish as their identity language.
- To organize an annual languages celebration. The 21st February - International Mother Language Day (IMLD) organized by the school community (teachers, staff, students and parents)

4. The study of languages in MYP

Our school is guided by the fundamental MYP concepts of holistic education and intercultural awareness. Our programme encourages students to make connections across subjects, and to reach the highest level of literacy and proficiency in all languages. Therefore, we offer many language levels to allow students develop their skills to their full potential.

- Under the Dutch law all students have to take Dutch as A or B language.
- English and Dutch are studied by all students.
- Dutch native students study Dutch as Language A all through their career at International School Almere.
- Non-native Dutch learners in MYP study the Dutch language and culture as “Language Acquisition”, with the possibility of moving into Dutch “Language and Literature”, according to the teacher’s advice.
- English and Dutch are offered as “Language and Literature” and “Language Acquisition” courses. Students are placed according to the outcome of the interview during the admissions procedure and if necessary entrance tests. The subject teachers are supportive, give them to acclimatize with the subject requirements and then after 6 months achievement levels are awarded.
- The Mother tongue coordinator has a short oral or written test to check Spanish and French proficiency of the student entering school from MYP3 onwards.
- All students in MYP study three languages* throughout their MYP career. As previously stated, all students study English and Dutch as well as French and Spanish in MYP1. In MYP1 students are exposed to French and Spanish languages to get a feel for these languages. The students can then make a choice between French and Spanish at the end of MYP1. From MYP2 onwards the students continue with their third language of choice till MYP5.
- New students admitted in MYP4 and MYP5 are offered an option of joining an additional language course for Spanish beginners (Phase 1 and 2)
- Native speakers in Spanish and French in MYP are in the same class with non-native students. They are given extra material to support the native language, and they are given some subjective feedback on their proficiency level. These students do not follow the
- language acquisition course in that particular language. These may be one or two students if at all in the class.

* Note: Students that are new to instructions in English and/or students entering our school without having studied French, or Spanish may have this requirement waved. Decisions are made on individual basis.

Language courses in MYP

MYP 1	ENGLISH		DUTCH		SPANISH	FRENCH
	Language and Literature	Language Acquisition Phase 1- 4 (Phases divided over two groups of students)	Language and Literature	Language Acquisition Phase 1- 4 (Phases divided over two groups of students)	Language Acquisition Phase 1	Language Acquisition Phase 1
MYP2	ENGLISH		DUTCH		SPANISH OR FRENCH	
	Language and Literature	Language Acquisition Phase 1- 4 (Phases divided over two groups of students)	Language and Literature	Language Acquisition Phase 1- 4 (Phases divided over two groups of students)	Language Acquisition Phase 1-2	Language Acquisition Phase 1-2
MYP3	ENGLISH		DUTCH		SPANISH OR FRENCH	
	Language and Literature	Language Acquisition Phase 1- 4 (Phases divided over two groups of students)	Language and Literature	Language Acquisition Phase 1- 4 (Phases divided over two groups of students)	Language Acquisition Phase 2-3	Language Acquisition Phase 2-3
MYP4	ENGLISH		DUTCH		SPANISH OR FRENCH	
	Language and Literature	Language Acquisition Phase 1- 4 (Phases divided over two groups of students)	Language and Literature	Language Acquisition Phase 1- 4 (Phases divided over two groups of students)	Language Acquisition Phase 1- 4 (Phases divided over two groups of students)	Language Acquisition Phase 3-4
MYP5	ENGLISH		DUTCH		SPANISH OR FRENCH	
	Language and Literature	Language Acquisition Phase 1- 4 (Phases divided over two groups of students)	Language and Literature	Language Acquisition Phase 1- 4 (Phases divided over two groups of students)	Language Acquisition Phase 1- 4 (Phases divided over two groups of students)	Language Acquisition Phase 3-4

5.The study of languages in DP

In all IB programmes, language learning is recognized as a developmental process in which students have opportunities to build on prior knowledge and skills, in order to help them progress to the next phase of language growth.

In both MYP and DP language subjects, we encourage students to gain competence in an additional

language with the long-term goal of multilingualism, we enable students to develop lifelong learning skills, and we stimulate students to be aware and to understand the perspectives of people from other cultures.

During the MYP language courses the six skill areas – listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and presenting - are very well developed, so that students can have a smooth transition to DP language studies.

In DP our school offers English and Dutch as Language A subjects, and English, Dutch, Spanish and French as Language B subjects. This also includes Dutch ab initio and Spanish ab initio language courses. The choice of language level depends upon the language profile, the level of proficiency and literacy in the chosen language and the teacher’s recommendation. There is logical streaming of students from MYP language courses to the DP Language courses. If students stream in from the national system into the Diploma programme, they have to choose Dutch, Language and literature as one of their subjects.

In addition for students who do not have English or Dutch as their most proficient languages, they can choose self-taught language literature course in the DP. So far students have chosen the following Self-Taught language courses:
(German, Spanish, Hebrew, Greek, Turkish, Russian, Mandarin, South Korean).

Language Choices in the IB Diploma Programme at IS Almere:

GROUP 1 LANGUAGE A	DUTCH Language and Literature SL - HL	ENGLISH Language and Literature SL - HL	SCHOOL SUPPORTED SELF TAUGHT Literature SL			
GROUP 2 LANGUAGE B	DUTCH Language Acquisition SL - HL	SPANISH ab initio SL	ENGLISH SL - HL	FRENCH SL - HL	SPANISH SL - HL	SPANISH ab initio SL AB INITIO SL

The following languages are chosen till date by students as self-taught language: - Spanish, Turkish, Russian, German, Mandarin, Hebrew, Greek, South Korean

The language policy is to be read in conjunction with the admissions policy, and the assessment policy. This policy will be reviewed in June 2020.

References

IB. 2008. Guidelines for developing a school language policy. Cardiff, UK. International Baccalaureate Organization.

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