

Language Policy

Updated: June 2025

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1. Philosophy

Language serves as a bridge to connect people across cultural divides. It enables interaction, preserves cultural identity, and fosters understanding among diverse nations and cultures. At the International School Almere, we encourage students to value, appreciate, and enjoy using language. Through listening, reading, writing, and speaking, language becomes a vehicle for academic growth.

English is the language of communication at our school. We also recognize that developing one's home language is essential for further language acquisition and personal growth.

2. Aims

We aim to:

- Foster an appreciation and enjoyment of language.
- Help students develop skills to effectively speak, read, write, and listen, enabling them to learn with purpose and confidence across diverse contexts.
- Cultivate the ability to recognize and select appropriate language for different situations.
- Facilitate integration into the local community by teaching Dutch as an additional language and exploring 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 where students feel free to express themselves.
- We recognize the needs of students working in a language other than their home language, offering diverse educational opportunities to reach all learners.
- We will always engage students as active learners, fostering inquiry and promoting real-life applications of language.
- We will support students' development by acting as facilitators who guide them to reach their potential.
- We will differentiate when assessing students' work to provide meaningful tasks and assessments, considering all levels and abilities.

All students are encouraged to:

- Maintain and value their home language as well as appreciate the home languages of other students.
- Become fluent in more than one language.
- Express themselves orally and in writing across various media and situations.
- Read and interpret a wide range of literature that reflects diverse cultures.
- Explore language through the arts.
- View language as a tool for learning.

“Home language”

At our school, we have found that the term "mother tongue" does not apply to all our students. Many of them speak and write in multiple languages at home, making it challenging to identify a single mother tongue. We have asked students which language they feel most comfortable with and have therefore adopted the term "home language".

Agreements:

- To provide resources that promote the development of the home language.
- To advise and encourage all learners using a language other than their own to have a dictionary at hand or use translation apps during the initial months of classes.
- To create opportunities for after-school clubs focused on home language instruction, whether supervised by the school, self-taught, or taught externally. For instance, the Spanish "Club de lectura" is an example of such opportunities provided for students whose home language is Spanish.
- To coordinate an annual languages celebration, such as International Mother Language Day (IMLD) on February 21st, organized by the school community including 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 program encourages students to forge connections across subjects and achieve the highest levels of literacy and proficiency in all languages. To this end, we offer a range of language levels that enable students to develop their skills to their fullest potential.

- Under Dutch law, all students are required to enroll in either Dutch "Language and Literature" or "Language Acquisition".
- Both English and Dutch are compulsory subjects for all students.
- Dutch native students consistently study Dutch as "Language and Literature" throughout their tenure at International School Almere.
- Non-native Dutch learners in MYP study Dutch language and culture under "Language Acquisition," with the option to transition to Dutch "Language and Literature" based on teacher recommendation.
- English and Dutch are offered as both "Language and Literature" and "Language Acquisition" courses. Placement is determined by interview outcomes during admissions, supplemented by necessary entrance tests. Teachers provide support and allow students time to acclimate to course requirements. Given that students' English level can significantly impact their overall performance in all subjects, grades will not be awarded during the first 6 months.
- Throughout their MYP career, all students study three languages*. In MYP1, students study English, Dutch, French or Spanish.
- New students entering MYP2, MYP3, MYP4 and MYP5 have the option to join a beginner course in Spanish or French (Emergent level, Phases 1 and 2).
- Native speakers of Spanish and French in MYP are required to study a different language.

**Note: Students who are new to instruction in English and/or those entering our school without prior study of French or Spanish may have this requirement waived. Decisions are made on an individual basis.*

Language Acquisition levels and phases

Teaching and learning in the language acquisition subject group are structured around three proficiency levels, each comprising two phases, resulting in a total of six phases. These phases are not tied to specific age groups or MYP years but instead form a developmental progression in additional language learning. Depending on their prior language-learning experiences, students have the flexibility to start at any phase within this continuum and can exit at any point based on their achieved proficiency.

EMERGENT COMMUNICATOR		CAPABLE COMMUNICATOR		PROFICIENT COMMUNICATOR	
Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5	Phase 6

The school has the discretion to determine how students are grouped into the six phases. However, it is crucial to prioritize reasonable differentiation and manageable combinations of proficiencies within each class. Therefore:

- Students will be grouped in no more than two consecutive phases in any single class.
- Students who have no prior knowledge of the additional language they wish to study in the MYP should begin in Phase 1.
- Phase 6 is not typically the exit level for most students.

Language proficiency progression through the levels

As students advance through the three levels and six phases, they are expected to enhance their capacity to communicate appropriately and effectively across a broad spectrum of social, cultural, and academic contexts, catering to diverse audiences and purposes. Formative and summative assessments of learning experiences play a crucial role in documenting students' progress and achievements.

The phases, MYP Language Acquisition global proficiency table, and assessment criteria rubrics are essential tools for determining the minimum requirements for advancing through the phases and potentially achieving promotion to MYP Language and Literature.

English

- **MYP1-4:** in order to progress from Language Acquisition Phase 6 to English Language and Literature, students must achieve a minimum final grade of 5 across all criteria by the end of the school year (Term 3).
- **MYP5:** in order to progress from Language Acquisition Phase 6 to DP SL English Language and Literature, students must achieve a minimum final grade of 5 across all criteria by the end of Term 2.

- **MYP5:** in order to progress from Language Acquisition Phase 6 to DP HL English Language and Literature, students must achieve a minimum final grade of 5 across all criteria by the end of Term 2. Additionally, students need to achieve a 6 for the reading and writing criteria.

Dutch

- **Emergent Level, Phases 1-2:** students must complete two years of Dutch to progress to the Capable Level, Phases 3-4. MYP4/5 students will undergo evaluation to determine their eligibility for the on-screen examination at the Capable Level.
- **Capable Level, Phases 3-4:** students must complete four years of Dutch to progress to the Proficient Level, Phases 5-6. Additionally, they need to achieve a final grade of 5 out of 8. MYP4/5 students will be evaluated to determine their eligibility for the on-screen examination at the Proficient Level.
- **MYP5:** in order to progress from Language Acquisition Phase 6 to DP HL Dutch Language and Literature, students must achieve a minimum final grade of 5 across all criteria by the end of Term 2. Additionally, students need to achieve a 6 for the reading and writing criteria.

***Note:** If a student shows rapid development in the language, they may advance to a higher phase during the academic year following a discussion and agreement between the department and the MYP coordinators.*

Spanish and French

VERTICAL GROUPS	
SPANISH	FRENCH
MYP 2/3 Emergent Level Phase 1-2	MYP 2/3/4 Emergent Level Phase 1-2
MYP 4/5 Emergent Level Phase 1-2	

- **Progression criteria for Phases:** A minimum final grade of 5 out of 8 is required to advance to the next phase. All four criteria must be assessed, taking into account the duration of the student's course attendance.
- **MYP2 Vertical Group:** Students remain in the MYP3 Emergent level.
- **MYP3 Vertical Group:**
 - Option 1:* Achieve a minimum final grade of 5 out of 8 to move to the horizontal MYP4 group (Capable Level). The four criteria are assessed twice, considering the duration of the student's course attendance.
 - Option 2:* If students do not achieve a final grade of 5 out of 8, they continue in the Vertical group at MYP4 Emergent level.
- **MYP4/5 Vertical Group:** Students continue in the Emergent level.

***Note:** Exceptions can be discussed in unique cases with the Language team and the MYP coordinators.*

Language courses in MYP

Secondary

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MYP1	ENGLISH		DUTCH		SPANISH	FRENCH
	Language and Literature	Language Acquisition Vertical Group Phase 1-2 (Emergent Level) Vertical Group Phase 3-4 (Capable Level)		Language Acquisition Phase 1-2 (Emergent Level) Phase 3-4 (Capable Level)	Language Acquisition Phase 1 (Emergent Level)	Language Acquisition Phase 1 (Emergent Level)
MYP2	ENGLISH		DUTCH		SPANISH or FRENCH	
	Language and Literature	Language Acquisition Vertical Group Phase 1-2 (Emergent Level) Vertical Group Phase 3-4 (Capable Level)		Language Acquisition Phase 1-2 (Emergent Level) Phase 3-4 (Capable Level)	Language Acquisition Phase 1 (Emergent Level) Vertical Group Phase 1-2 (Emergent Level)	Language Acquisition Phase 1 (Emergent Level)
MYP3	ENGLISH		DUTCH		SPANISH or FRENCH	
	Language and Literature	Language Acquisition Vertical Group Phase 1-2 (Emergent Level) Vertical Group Phase 3-4 (Capable Level)	Language and Literature	Language Acquisition Phase 1-2 (Emergent Level) Phase 3-4 (Capable Level) Phase 5-6 (Proficient Level)	Language Acquisition Phase 2 (Emergent Level) Vertical Group Phase 1-2 (Emergent Level)	Language Acquisition Phase 2 (Emergent Level) Vertical Group Phase 1-2 (Emergent Level)
MYP4	ENGLISH		DUTCH		SPANISH or FRENCH	
	Language and Literature	Language Acquisition Vertical Group Phase 3-4 (Capable Level)	Language and Literature	Language Acquisition Phase 1-2 (Emergent Level) Phase 3-4 (Capable Level) Phase 5-6 (Proficient Level)	Language Acquisition Phase 3 (Capable Level) Vertical Group Phase 1-2 (Emergent Level)	Language Acquisition Phase 3 (Capable Level) Vertical Group Phase 1-2 (Emergent Level)
MYP5	ENGLISH		DUTCH		SPANISH or FRENCH	
	Language and Literature	Language Acquisition Vertical Group Phase 3-4 (Capable Level)	Language and Literature	Language Acquisition Phase 1-2 (Emergent Level) Phase 3-4 (Capable Level) Phase 5-6 (Proficient Level)	Language Acquisition Phase 4 (Capable Level) Vertical Group Phase 1-2 (Emergent Level)	Language Acquisition Phase 4 (Capable Level) Vertical Group Phase 1-2 (Emergent Level)

5. The study of languages in DP

In all IB programmes, language learning is acknowledged as a developmental process where students can build upon prior knowledge and skills to progress to the next phase of language proficiency. In both MYP and DP language subjects, we strive to foster students' competence in additional languages with the ultimate aim of achieving multilingualism. Our approach enables students to cultivate lifelong learning skills and encourages them to appreciate and understand perspectives from diverse cultures.

During MYP language courses, we focus extensively on developing the six skill areas: listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, and presenting. This thorough preparation ensures a seamless transition to DP language studies.

In the DP, our school offers English and Dutch as "Language and Literature" subjects, and English, Dutch, Spanish, and French as "Language Acquisition" subjects, which includes Dutch "Ab Initio." The choice of language level depends on the student's language profile, proficiency level, literacy in the chosen language, and teacher recommendation. There is a structured progression from MYP language courses to DP Language courses. Students entering the Diploma programme from the national system are required to select Dutch "Language and Literature" as one of their subjects.

Additionally, for students whose most proficient languages are neither English nor Dutch, they have the option to choose a Self-Taught language literature course in the DP. Students must request their chosen language in advance so that the school can verify with the IB and the availability of a language company providing tutors to support these courses.

Currently, students have opted for the following Self-Taught language courses:

- German
- Spanish
- Hebrew
- Greek
- Turkish
- Russian
- Mandarin
- South Korean
- Romanian

Language choices in the IB Diploma Programme

GROUP 1 LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE	DUTCH	ENGLISH	SELF TAUGHT	
	Standard Level High level	Standard Level High level	Standard Level (School support)	
GROUP 2 LANGUAGE ACQUISITION	DUTCH	SPANISH	FRENCH	
	Ab Initio	Standard Level	Standard Level	
	Standard Level	High level	High level	
	High level			

The language policy should be read in conjunction with the admissions policy and the assessment policy. This policy will undergo a review every two years. In cases requiring urgent clarification, the policy will be reviewed during the end-of-year meetings at the conclusion of the academic year.

6. The study of languages in CP

In alignment with our commitment to developing internationally minded, multilingual students, all CP students at our school will engage in a DP Language Acquisition course in a language that is not their home language. This approach fosters linguistic diversity and equips students with skills to communicate effectively in global contexts. Over the course of the programme, students will also build a comprehensive Language Development Portfolio. This portfolio will document their progress in acquiring the new language, including reflective entries, evidence of language use, and practical applications in real-world scenarios.

To connect language learning with their career-related studies, students will have opportunities to apply their new language skills in contexts relevant to their chosen professional pathway. Whether through internships, projects, or industry-specific communication, students will explore how linguistic proficiency enhances their ability to collaborate, innovate, and thrive in multicultural professional environments. This integration ensures that language learning not only supports personal growth but also becomes a critical asset in their future careers.

References

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