



LANGUAGE

STATEMENT OF AIM

We aim to create a challenging and motivating environment where the language of instruction is English and multilingualism is valued and celebrated. We view language as a tool for making meaning in the world. We believe that every student has a personal and a cultural set of experiences, skills, and interests, which must be considered in the teaching and learning process. At MEF International School, multilingualism and the development of critical literacy are considered important factors in fostering international-mindedness through the promotion of cultural identity, intercultural awareness and global citizenship. Through our language programmes, we aim to develop confident, curious, highly proficient and enthusiastic readers, writers, viewers, presenters, speakers and listeners. As a result, teaching and learning is designed to "promote inquiry-based authentic language learning; focus on the transdisciplinary nature of language learning; incorporate the teaching and learning of language into the programme of inquiry; develop the skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing and media literacy; interrelate the skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing and media literacy; provide for the teaching of additional languages; promote consistency of practice in the teaching and learning of all languages where more than one language of instruction is used" (IB, "Guidelines for developing a school language policy", 2008).

RATIONALE

Language is taught meaningfully and contextually. These contexts vary but often involve the use of real-life scenarios, native speakers, the local area and a wide variety of text types. We advocate the learning of language through inquiry, allowing students to make connections with context to explore and investigate. The learning of any language is developmental by nature, building constructively on what each individual student knows to move them forward.

The language of instruction at MEF International School is English, and it is understood that the acquisition of a language may occur relatively quickly in non-academic terms but that academic proficiency can take longer. For this reason, all teachers at MEF IS are considered to be English language teachers, and the acquisition of language is viewed to be an integral part of learning. Through our admission policy and in school support provisions, we aim to enable all of our students to access the curriculum in English. Instruction is differentiated and scaffolded for non-native learners of English.

A strong home language is seen as crucial in the development of additional languages. There are currently a wide variety of native languages used by students at the school. Students are encouraged to develop their home language. Use of home language is encouraged in school when it supports learning. It is understood that fluency in a home language strengthens proficiency in English, our medium of instruction.

Aside from English, the school offers foreign language courses. An awareness of and knowledge of Turkish as our host country language is paramount. In addition, the school offers French and Spanish as modern foreign languages.

In alignment with the International Baccalaureate, the school is committed to the following practices:

- The school places importance on language learning, including home language, host country language and other languages (IB Standard A, Practice 7).
- The school utilizes the resources and expertise of the community to enhance learning within the programmes (IB Standard B2, Practice 11).
- Collaborative planning and reflection recognizes that all teachers are responsible for language development of students (IB Standard C1, Practice 8).
- Teaching and learning address the diversity of student language needs, including those for students learning a language(s) other than their home language (IB Standard C3, Practice 7).
- Teaching and learning demonstrates that all teachers are responsible for language development of students (IB Standard C3, Practice 8).
- Assessment at the school aligns with the requirements of the programme(s). (IB Standard C4, Practice 1).

PROCEDURES

In the Primary School

Mainstream English Language

Speaking and listening, reading, and writing complement the specific course content in the mainstream English Language Programme. Transdisciplinary skills and topics are incorporated into lessons. For further information about the mainstream English Language Curriculum, the course guide may be consulted.

Modern Foreign Languages

In the primary school Grades 2-6, parents and students may select either French, Turkish or Spanish. Instruction is usually provided at a beginner or intermediate level. Therefore, if a student is already fluent in one of these languages they are expected to learn another language. Once a student enters Grade 2 they may select the language they would like to learn. It is recommended that students stick to this language throughout their years in primary school.

Modern Foreign Languages has a communicative approach, trying to develop students' communication skills in the foreign language. Modern Foreign Languages at our school is delivered as a concept-based program, rather than content based. The programme may be linked to transdisciplinary units in some grade levels.

Development of home language

New students are often initially paired with others of the same home language to assist them in their learning process and socialization. Home languages are celebrated throughout the school during activities and special events. In the library, a "World Languages" section is maintained, with contributions from families in the form of donated books in mother-tongues. New titles are regularly ordered. Each year during Book Week, there is a focus on reading stories in other languages and students share stories that they have written in the languages they are studying.

Host Country Studies

Host Country Studies lessons include some elementary Turkish language but focus predominantly upon Turkish culture and traditions including everyday life. Although students who are fluent in Turkish are included in these lessons, the focus for them is on culture and traditions with some independent study with teacher direction of the language.

PROCEDURES

In the Secondary School

Mainstream English Language

The language of instruction in the Secondary School is English. First and second language English courses are offered at all grade levels. The Administration (Principal, Deputy Principals) decide on the groupings, taking into consideration previous performance and teacher recommendations. Students new to the school take a placement test if deemed necessary. Students in Grade 11 and Grade 12 either take first language English or a self-taught course in their native tongue. All subject teachers make the curriculum accessible to learners no matter their English level.

Modern Foreign Languages

Students may select either French, Spanish or Turkish in Grades 6-8, and French or Spanish in Grades 9-12. Instruction is usually provided at beginner or intermediate level so if a student is already fluent in one of these languages they are expected to learn the other language. The school encourages students to remain in their Modern Foreign Language course choice throughout their school career.

The middle school curriculum is taught in mixed ability groups. The goal is that students finishing Grade 8 should have at least an A2 level (CECR).

Turkish is not offered as a second language after grade 8, as there are no IGCSE second language courses in Turkish. Students thereafter transfer to French or Spanish to study for IGCSE Second Language. Students studying for First Language examinations in these languages study independently. While students are encouraged to stay in the same language class during IGCSE, students are allowed to study the language of their choice with the understanding that IBDP second language courses are designed for learners with background knowledge; however, students needing to study an ab initio course will receive support.

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Turkish language Learning

Secondary second language Turkish courses reinforce the local culture by celebrating the language.

Second language Turkish classes are offered through Grade 8. Self-taught first language Turkish courses, depending on demand and feasibility, may be offered in the IB Diploma Programme.

Policy reviewed, August 2025