

XIS Language Policy

XIS LANGUAGE POLICY REVIEW
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School Profile

The language of instruction at Xiamen International School is English. The students of Xiamen International School are native speakers of many languages. A significant percentage come from Asian backgrounds and are native speakers of Mandarin or Korean. Proficiency of English ranges from emergent to proficient mother-tongue fluency, with every gradation in between. In general, older students demonstrate a greater degree of English proficiency. A small percentage of XIS students speak mother tongue languages other than English, Korean or Mandarin.

The Admissions Policy designates the admissions language requirements.

Language Philosophy at XIS

Language is at the heart of learning at XIS. Language is an essential means of communicating, learning, and thinking critically at all grade levels and is necessary for success in all content areas. Further, as an international school with students from across the world, XIS recognizes the cultural value of language learning. Language learning promotes internationalism and multicultural understanding. Language learning provides opportunities for enjoyment and creativity.

Mother-tongue is essential for culture, identity, cognitive development, and learning other languages. Children with a strong mother-tongue have a powerful advantage. Knowledge, skills, and concepts gained in one language often transfer to other languages.

Belief Statements

Teaching and learning demonstrates that all teachers are responsible for language development of students (IB Standard C3, Practice 8).

- All teachers in the school are considered teachers of language
- Language is an essential means of communicating, learning, and thinking critically
- Language learning provides opportunities for enjoyment and creativity
- Language is necessary for success in all content areas
- Development of language requires safe, courteous and effective learning communities.

The school places importance on language learning, including mother tongue, host country language and other languages (IB Standard A, Practice 7).

- Use of Mother-tongue facilitates communication and understanding
- Development of the mother-tongue is essential for culture, identity, cognitive development, and learning of other languages

The school promotes and develops international-mindedness (IB Standard A, Practice 4).

- Language learning has a cultural value
- Language learning promotes internationalism and multicultural understanding

Teaching and learning addresses the diversity of student language needs, including those for students learning a language(s) other than their mother tongue (IB Standard C3, Practice 7).

- Language is best developed through immersion, continual practice, and risk-taking
- Inclusive and differentiated learning environments support language development

XIS will grow as a learning community in which students, faculty, and all stakeholders consistently utilize data to monitor, improve, and share student learning and growth (XIS Strategic Plan 2013)

- Language learning is best supported and developed through consistent and appropriate use of relevant assessment data

Implications for Teaching and Learning

Language of Instruction

English is the language of instruction at Xiamen International School. XIS also recognizes the value of mother-tongue languages. In order to support students' development of language, content knowledge, and social/emotional learning, XIS teachers promote safe, courteous, and effective learning communities. XIS recognizes that Language is best developed through immersion, continual practice, and risk-taking. In addition, students at XIS must learn both knowledge, skills, and language; understandings gained in one language are transferable to another, and mother-tongue may facilitate communication and understanding. Classes are conducted in English, though students may use other languages in order to gain academic competency.

Instruction

All courses at XIS are inquiry-focused, standards-based and assessment driven. XIS teachers utilize backwards planning to develop formative and summative assessments. We emphasize knowledge, skills, and language learning, as well as encourage collaborative learning. XIS teachers use scaffolding and differentiation to ensure that all students, including language learners, can successfully complete course assessments as expected

The Importance of Language Learning: IB Standard C3, Practice 8

Through an emphasis on language learning, students develop skills in communication, cross-cultural understanding, and the ability to use language skills in a variety of contexts, purposes, and subject areas. XIS promotes the appreciation and understanding of language and literature, in English and a second language.

Mother Tongue Language Development: IB Standard A, Practice 7

XIS offers mother-tongue classes in Mandarin for PYP students and Korean and Mandarin for MYP and DP students. XIS also encourages on parents to support their children's language development in their mother tongue.

Mother-Tongue Language and Local Culture

XIS strives to support the mother tongue and cultural development of all students. Due to XIS's location in China, XIS also encourages all students to experience Chinese culture and language.

International-Mindedness: IB Standard A, Practice 4

XIS recognizes that Language is best developed through immersion, continual practice, and risk-taking. In addition, students at XIS must learn knowledge, skills, and language; understandings gained in one language are transferable to another, and mother-tongue may facilitate communication and understanding. Classes are conducted in English, though students may use other languages in order to gain academic competency.

- **Culture:** Students are invited and encouraged to share their culture and customs. The written, taught, and assessed curriculum include an emphasis on personal identity, culture, and multiculturalism.
- **Travel within China:** XIS is continuing to develop service-learning and experiential-learning programs. Secondary School students in grades six to eleven have the opportunity for a multi-day trip, usually within China, emphasizing Chinese culture, service-learning, and team development. Elementary students have frequent opportunities to travel within Xiamen to experience local businesses, environments, and Chinese culture.
- **Parent Communication:** When the information applies to all students in a particular program (PYP, MYP, DP), the school will strive to give parents access to translations.

Diversity of Language Needs: IB Standard C3, Practice 7

English is the language of instruction at Xiamen International School. XIS also recognizes the value of mother-tongue languages. XIS teachers promote safe, courteous, and effective learning communities for all learners.

Elaboration of Practices

Effective and efficient practices that our beliefs and philosophy PYP

XIS follows the inclusive model of language development.

- All elementary students, regardless of English language level, participate in the PYP Programme
- All teachers promote language and vocabulary development
- Homeroom Teachers work in collaboration with ELL Specialists to ensure that all activities are structured to meet students' readiness for inquiry and language development
- ELL Specialists and Homeroom Teachers closely monitor students' language development throughout the PYP years
- Homeroom Teachers and ELL Specialists collaborate to provide structured, explicit, and targeted support to students
- Mandarin Teachers play an important role in reinforcing, supporting and extending the Programme of inquiry

PYP teachers use assessment data to guide practice according to the (link) [XIS Assessment Policy](#) and the ES Essential Agreements regarding Language Continuums.

- XIS uses research-based strategies and techniques in order to support language development and to promote usage of language
- In order to ensure continued English language development occurs for every student, progress is monitored closely using a variety of assessment tools
- Assessment data is reviewed regularly and next steps are determined for each student
- Assessment data is also used to determine Programme needs

Language allows students to develop and share their understanding of new concepts and ideas.

- XIS Reading, Writing, and Speaking & Listening standards are incorporated into transdisciplinary units of inquiry so that language learning is authentic, relevant and support students' inquiries
- Teaching teams plan transdisciplinary learning experiences that enable learners to develop language within meaningful and enjoyable contexts
- A variety of inquiry strategies and routines are used to enable learners to make connections, apply their conceptual understanding, and transfer their learning to new situations
- English is the language of instruction, although mother-tongue language may be used by students in order to gain academic competency

PYP students with Mandarin as a mother-tongue participate in Mandarin classes to further develop their mother-tongue language skills.

PYP students with mother-tongue other than Mandarin, participate in Mandarin as an additional language classes.

PYP students new to English receive additional English instruction as needed.

PYP Teachers actively promote and encourage parents to read and converse with their children in their mother tongue.

Elaboration of Practices

MYP

Mother Tongue Development

Students whose mother tongue is English participate in Language and Literature classes in English; Mandarin or Korean speakers are encouraged to participate in Language and Literature classes in their mother tongue. These classes promote the appreciation, understanding, and analysis of language and literature in their mother tongue. MYP language and literature classes equip students with linguistic, analytical, and communicative skills that students can transfer to other subject groups. The objectives of MYP Language and Literature courses are to concentrate on the skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and presenting. Students are assessed using MYP criteria.

Students whose mother tongue is other than English, Mandarin, or Korean are encouraged to continue mother tongue development in their language community in order to improve and support their learning of language. Students are encouraged to use their mother tongue in the classroom to gain academic competency, to understand vocabulary, and form conceptual understandings across languages and cultures.

Additional Language Development:

For English Language Learners, XIS offers a variety of courses that focus on developing strong oral and written communication skills in English, reading comprehension, and literature analysis. English Language Learners may also receive additional support beyond their English classes. ELL specialists or subject specialists may also support ELL students in specific academic subjects, and collaborate with classroom teachers to plan units, assessments, and daily instruction. Given the need, ELL specialists may also support students in English classes.

Time for teachers to collaboratively plan strategies to support language learners may be built into the respective teachers' schedules. ELL teachers are also able to attend department meetings when needed. In order for students to move into the English Language and Literature course, students must demonstrate the ability to access the Language and Literature curriculum. Various methods are used to determine language ability and assessment data is reviewed regularly to determine students' progress and next steps. The XIS MYP English Language Pathways document is used to support decision making about students' placement in English Language classes.

XIS offers language courses in Mandarin Language Acquisition for students learning Mandarin. Mandarin Language Acquisition courses are available across the phases of language development. Assessment data is used to place students in phase 1, 3 and 5 classes, with flexible phasing depending on the language learning needs of the cohort. Students in Year 1, Years 2 & 3 and Years 4 & 5 of the MYP are grouped by language acquisition phase, to support language development. Where necessary, students may move between phases as their language develops, as they progress towards the Language and Literature courses. Mandarin Language Acquisition courses play an integral role in developing cultural and conceptual understandings.

Elaboration of Practices DP

English language instruction:

As a progression from their English language learning in the MYP, all DP students participate in the Language A course at SL or HL, whether they are full Diploma Program or High School diploma students. It is expected that students are able to participate fully in all other courses offered in English. Students with English needs are encouraged to seek additional help from teachers or seek outside tutoring. IB Diploma Program teachers are encouraged to keep the language needs of students in mind while planning and conducting DP courses.

Additional Language Development:

XIS encourages all students to develop a concurrent second language and in many cases bilingual diplomas are awarded. XIS offers mother tongue development as well as foreign language learning in the IB Diploma Programme. The different Additional Language courses offered are: Mandarin A, Mandarin B, and Mandarin ab initio, or through online courses such as Spanish language study (with an IB-approved provider) as part of the IB Programme.

Mother tongue Development:

Korean speakers may also take Korean A at XIS in the DP. Students may also study a mother tongue language independently (self-taught Language A). Students are encouraged to use their mother tongue in the classroom to gain academic competency, to understand vocabulary, and form conceptual understandings across languages and cultures.

Elaboration of Practices Further Support

Co-Curricular Language: Whenever possible XIS encourages co-curricular language courses focused on additional and mother-tongue language learning.

Library: The school library provides students with resources in various languages spoken at XIS, including a large collection of Korean and Mandarin works.

Professional Development

In recognition of our student population and needs, XIS considers language acquisition as an important Professional Development need. To improve teacher capacities and skills, XIS offers on-site professional development through language development consultants, online trainings, and a professional library. Professional Learning Communities and Teacher-led workshops focus on language learning, including language assessments, interaction, and differentiation. XIS also utilizes teacher collaboration times as an important method to share, develop, and discuss best practices for supporting language learners.

Teachers are also encouraged to attend professional development workshops focusing on language development and support.