

WINS LANGUAGE POLICY

Introduction - Language Profile

English is the language of instruction at WINS, but the school is located in a community where a good portion of the school population comes from the host country and their first language is Italian. The other half of the school population comes from all over the world.

Therefore, WINS has the dual objective to combine an international program with a strong Italian language and culture base so that students can benefit from the values and advantages of both the IB approach as well as the rich Italian cultural heritage.

Being an international school, teachers are from countries with different English accents with the result that all types of English are acknowledged and recognized.

Language Philosophy

The pedagogical team at WINS firmly believes that we must learn languages in order to use them. Teachers have to use English as vehicular language in school at all times when working with students.

However, language teachers (Spanish, German, Italian, etc.) are allowed to communicate in their target language with students even outside classes.

Internationalism comes with an appreciation of diversity, therefore in WINS Teachers can use their preferred language to communicate with colleagues, as far as the use of a language that is not English does not preclude any member of staff from understanding and being able to interact.

Students are surrounded by their native language when they are not at school or are with their families. Therefore, we want to ensure that students are firmly placed in an English-speaking environment while they are at WINS.

WINS believes that languages are a fundamental tool for the development of internationally minded students, and we encourage students to study three languages from the beginning of the primary program.

English Requirements

WINS is a non-selective school that considers its status as an international school a duty to be inclusive and support the enrollment of both foreign and domestic students who wish to approach an international education out of either need or choice. For us, this implies that there are no minimum English language entry requirements up to grade 6. (For further information, refer to Admissions Policy)

Students whose initial level of English is below the grade-working level will be supported through in-class differentiated activities, specific curricular EAL lessons, and/or additional extra-curricular EAL lessons. Each situation will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and the best individualized solution will be implemented. Please, see EAL Policy for further details.

From grade 7 onward, the school wishes to provide students who are not fluent in English with the opportunity to join the program if they meet minimum requirements and demonstrate a strong motivation to learn. For this reason, the minimum requirements for enrollment are as follows:

▣ **Grades 7 and 8:** A2 level of the European framework, KET with Merit, or a passing mark on our placement test.

▣ **Grades 9 and 10:** B1 level of the European framework, PET, or a passing mark on our placement test.

▣ **IBDP:** B1 level of the European framework, PET with Merit, IGCSE English Second Language grade C or equivalent, or a passing mark on our placement test.

Students who fall short or barely reach the minimum entry requirements for English are obliged to follow additional English classes that are aimed at reaching a full B1 level/PET by the end of MYP2 and a full B2 level/FCE by the end of IBDP Year 1.

Home and family languages

Native languages other than English or Italian will be supported throughout the school. WINS provides a wide range of multilingual resources to support the learning of multiple languages, including mother tongue languages.

In the Diploma Years section, native languages other than English or Italian will be supported by offering self-taught language subjects. In lower grade levels, students will have access to extra-curricular courses organized by the school, contingent on the needs of specific groups in the school community.

The libraries will support students through all levels with sections dedicated to the different native languages of our students. The school also provide access to different electronic resources: reading apps, online encyclopedia, online magazines which offer access to information in languages other than English

Language in the PYP

Language is an essential tool for young learners to construct meaning and make connections to support their development. At WINS, language instruction is transdisciplinary and incorporated into the program of inquiry, and all teachers at WINS are teachers of language.

Language instruction and learning outside of the program of inquiry is also taught through a constructivist, inquiry-based approach to encourage authentic learning experiences for language development.

As an international school, WINS supports **multilingualism** in its aim to support and develop internationally minded learners. The languages of our school, the local community, and school families are celebrated and shared. Children are encouraged to take pride in their home and family language. At WINS, we believe that exposure to multiple languages and help to develop a culture of caring, open mindedness and communication.

The PYP uses **student language portraits** that include student reflections, family input, and assessment data to help understand the context of the student's language development journey.

The PYP follows the IB Language Scope and Sequence, which includes three interrelated language strands: oral language, written language, and visual language. These three interrelated strands consider both the receptive and expressive aspects of language, and encourage a balanced approach to language development.

Language instruction aims to develop balanced learning and includes phonics, grammar, guided reading, subject-specific vocabulary development, reading of a variety of texts, authentic writing experiences and writing for different purposes, the writing process, and creative expression. Lessons are differentiated to meet the needs of all students, and classroom teachers regularly assess their students' language development throughout the year to inform individual and small group instruction. Teachers regularly communicate with families about student progress. Parents are an important part of the WINS community, and in the PYP parents are encouraged to read with their children and/or support their child's language learning at home.

English is the primary language of instruction. For language benchmarks and specific English spelling, punctuation and grammar content, the PYP at WINS follows the National Curriculum of England standards.

All PYP students also have five periods of Italian lessons per week starting in the Early Years. Under the supervision of the PYP Coordinator, and in collaboration with the Italian teachers,

in WINS we ensure that the Italian language follows the learning goals of the Italian National Curriculum for native speakers, delivering its content through the PYP inquiry-based framework.

The Italian department at WINS is responsible for the placement of students in different Italian courses across the Italian continuum. Students with Italian heritage will be encouraged to join L1 Italian classes. However, individual in class and/or outside class support might have to be agreed with the family to support the full integration of the student into the established grade.

From first grade, all primary students choose an additional language of study between Spanish and German, which will be their third language.

Language in the MYP

Direct language instruction happens in the relevant language classes. However, all teachers are considered language teachers and are expected to include strategies to support language learning and incorporate a range of teaching and learning strategies

to ensure that students have access to necessary skills in terms of oral communication, written communication, and visual communication.

In the MYP, language is divided into two departments: Language & Literature and Language Acquisition. Every student is required to take three languages. Students' allocation into either of these courses is directly related to their level of fluency in the specific language (as indicated by prior test scores or our placement tests). (For further information, refer to Admissions Policy)

English is the primary language of instruction, but all MYP students take one language course in Italian.

Native-speaking Italian students follow an IB MYP Italian Language & Literature course that meets the standards of the national curriculum. Students who are not native-speaking Italians follow the Language Acquisition course, where teaching and learning is organized into six phases.

The Italian department at WINS is responsible for setting of students in the different Italian courses, across the Italian continuum. Having an Italian nationality will not be enough for been accepted int an Italian L&L course. Language competence will be tested and evaluated by the Italian Department, and a plan for language learning will be shared and agreed with the family.

For example: Students might be put in a Italian language acquisition course on entrance to the school and then move to an Italian L&L course at the a later stage, according to their progress.

Viceversa, a student could be accepted into a language and Literature course, and individual support might be agreed with the family to support the student during the first months.

Each case will be considered on an individual basis and a plan will be shared and agreed with the family.

Language Acquisition

Students are placed in classes according to the IB's continuum of language learning phases. The school has a flexible placement policy that allows student movement throughout the school year in relation to the student's progression along this curriculum

Moving from Language Acquisition to Language & Literature

Teaching and learning in the language acquisition subject group is organized in six phases. The phases do not correspond to particular age groups or MYP years. Students do not necessarily begin in phase one – they can begin at any phase, depending on their prior experiences, and may exit from any phase on the continuum. (For further information, refer to Language acquisition guide, table 2, Progression along the additional language learning continuum)

At the beginning of the school year, students will be placed in the pertinent phase according to their level.

It is at the school's discretion to group students in the six phases. However, it is essential to consider first and foremost a reasonable differentiation and manageable combination of proficiencies in one class:

Students placed in a phase may move into another phase throughout the year depending on their development across all areas of language.

Students meeting all criteria for one phase of the Language Acquisition continuum will be placed in the next phase.

Students in phase 6 of the Language Acquisition continuum for Italian will be placed in the Language and Literature class.

Students in phase 5 of the Language Acquisition continuum for English will be placed in the Language and Literature class.

For students moving up from the MYP to the DP, successful completion of phase 4 at MYP level will allow students to register for a group 1 language if required by their study plan. Successful completion of phase 5 is recommended.

Mother tongue support in the MYP

The school supports students who cannot be provided with formal tuition in their mother tongue during school hours, and it helps organize Mother Tongue classes outside the school curriculum using school facilities at the end of a regular school day. These courses are subject to a fee.

Language requirements in the DP

The school is non-selective with the exception of one requirement: all students entering the school must have a level of competence in the school's language of instruction (English) such that they are able to study that language at one of the following IB Diploma Program courses from group 1 or 2: English A or English B at HL or SL.

Language proficiency tests will be administered when students apply for the Diploma Program in order to assess their competence in English and /or Italian. Results from the test will be used to place students appropriately. (For further information, refer to Admissions Policy).

For students moving up from the MYP, successful completion of phase 4 at MYP5 level will allow students to register for a group 1 language if required by their study plan. Successful completion of phase 5 is recommended.

The school recognizes the centrality of language competence in the academic development of students and since language is central to learning, all teachers are, in practice, language teachers.

It is a requirement of the DP that all candidates study either one group 1 and one group 2 language course or two group 1 languages courses where this is appropriate. A further language, from either group 1 or 2, could be studied instead of a group 6 subject

The following languages will be offered on a taught basis:

- English A Language and Literature HL/SL
- Italian A Language and Literature HL/SL
- English B HL
- Italian B HL/SL
- Italian ab-initio
- German B HL/SL
- Spanish B HL/SL

The DP Coordinator will support students and parents in choosing the most appropriate course when making their subjects choices for the DP.

Mother tongue support in the DP

Students whose mother-tongue language is neither English nor Italian can study their mother-tongue on a school supported self-taught basis if the mother-tongue language is offered by the IB.

A teacher will be appointed to supervise and advise the self-taught candidate(s). The teacher, in collaboration with the Diploma Programme (DP) coordinator, will:

- *advise the candidate on choosing a course of study that conforms to IB regulations*

- ensure that the candidate has access to the works chosen **before starting the course of study**
- ensure that the candidate is studying the works agreed upon with the supervising teacher and, in the case of special request languages, approved by the examiner responsible
- provide guidance on the techniques required for such tasks as essay writing and literary commentary
- supervise the work required for part 1 (“Works in translation”)
- give the candidate a clear idea of the course of study, the papers to be taken, their format and links to the course studied
- provide the candidate with the most recent version of the document *Language A: literature school- supported self-taught alternative oral assessment procedures, past examination papers and teacher support material* (all are available on the programme resource centre)
- provide the candidate with the published genre questions for the formal oral commentary specific to the examination session for which they are entered at the beginning of the course.
- ensure that the candidate has regular access to the *Language A: literature guide* and is familiar with the assessment criteria for all assessed components.

Wherever possible, the candidate will be taught with candidates taking other language A: literature courses in the school.

(Diploma Programme Assessment Procedures 2019, IBO, Geneva)

Language Certifications

WINS believes that setting objectives and celebrating achievements are essential components in the learning process. Because of this, we encourage students to obtain language certifications for all languages studied at school.

During the Primary Years, not-native children are prepared to take the Cambridge Young Learners' exams (starters, Movers, Flyers) and the KEY , PET and FCE in the Middle Years. During the Diploma Years, students are encouraged to take either CAE and CPE or IELTS depending on their future goals.

Support for the preparation of IELTS, SAT and TOEFL exams can be arranged by the school and will be subject to an additional charge.

The study of other foreign languages is encouraged with the additional objective and opportunity of achieving officially recognized language certifications, which include the following:

For Spanish: DELE A2, B1, and B2

For German: ; Goethe-Zertifikat A2, B1, and B2

For Italian: _____

BEGINNER: CILS A1 (Level A1 of the CEFR), CILS A2 (Level A2 of the CEFR);

INDEPENDENT LEARNER: CILS One (Level B1 of the CEFR): adult module, adolescent module

Non-Native English-Speaking Teachers

Non-native English-speaking teachers who are required to teach subjects in English are required to have an appropriate level of the language, intended as a full C1 or upper intermediate level,

Handwriting Policy

PYP

Handwriting is an indispensable element of any primary education. It is essential not only as a tool for effective communication and organization but also culturally reflective and personally significant to learners.

As an international school, the student population at WINS comes from all over the world. Due to our students' cultural and educational backgrounds, in the PYP at WINS, a diversity of neat and legible printed letters and digits is accepted. However, in the grades where handwriting is explicitly taught (Early Years to Grade 1), we have adopted the print letter formation found in *Letters and Sounds*.

In regards to cursive, with respect to our host country and the educational heritage of Italian language learning and instruction, Italian cursive is explicitly taught and a requirement of the PYP starting in grade 1 through Italian language classes.

Here below, we outline in detail our policies regarding handwriting.

English Handwriting Policy

In English language instruction, the development of handwriting starts in the early years. At WINS, our English handwriting learning objectives are derived from the National Curriculum Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. The letter formation is from Appendix 2 of *Letters and Sounds: Principles and Practice of High Quality Phonics* (see appendices), which is our phonic program.

- Beginning in the **Kindergarten**, children are exposed to the correct formation of letters, letter shape families and their corresponding handwriting movements (for example, l, c, and r), and the proper way to use and handle pencils. Teachers reinforce the formation of print letters and numbers in Transition, Grade 1, and as needed throughout the primary years.
- In **Transition**, students learn how to form lower-case letters, capital letters, and the digits 0-9 in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place.
- In **first grade**, students continue to develop their print handwriting skills, the importance of forming lower case, capital letters and digits of the correct size,

orientation and in proportion to each other is regularly reinforced. The appropriate spacing between letters and words and groups of numbers is also taught and practiced.

- After first grade, handwriting is not explicitly taught in the homeroom unless needed on a case by case basis.
- WINS has opted not to teach any style of English language cursive as multiple styles are very different depending on the country, state or region. Additionally, we believe that learning various forms of cursive would risk being confusing for students. Moreover, as cursive is explicitly taught in all Italian language classes from Grade 1, all students will learn how to write in cursive through Italian.

As print handwriting is explicitly taught in Kindergarten, Transition, and Grade 1, the expectation for handwriting in the homeroom will reflect the print letter formation in *Letters and Sounds*.

Beyond Grade 1, other taught handwriting styles will be accepted as long as they meet legibility requirements. Sample scenarios are provided below:

- A student joins WINS in grade 4 from an Italian public school. He knows the Italian print and cursive standards. A neat, consistent, and legible level of both would be acceptable to his homeroom and specialist subject teachers. His Italian teacher would expect him to write in proper Italian cursive.
- A student joins WINS from the USA in grade 2. She learned a similar but slightly different form of print that remains clear and organized. Her handwriting would be acceptable to her homeroom and specialist subject teachers. Her Italian teacher would provide her with the necessary guidance and materials to practice Italian cursive to catch up to her class.
- A grade 2 student struggles with writing neatly and consistently. Her homeroom teacher puts on her a regular program of handwriting development. The teacher provides her letter formation and writing practice sheets based on *Letters and Sounds* letter formation.
- A student joins WINS from China in grade 5. He does not know the Roman alphabet. His homeroom and EAL teachers would provide him with support from our English *Letters and Sounds* letter formation materials to learn the correct way to write roman letters and their corresponding sounds. For the time being, his Italian teacher would accept print letters while helping the student learn Italian letter sounds and work towards Italian cursive over time.

Italian handwriting Policy

Italian teachers will teach the Italian cursive style in Italian classes, from Grade 1.

Choice of lines for Italian language classes:

1. 1) Transition > handwriting packets (i.e. from Twinkl); big squares
2. 2) Gr.1-2 > A-lines with vertical lines

3. 3) Gr.3-4 > B-lines
4. 4) Gr.5 > C-lines

Grade teachers will indicate specific requirements on the beginning of the school year stationary request to families.

In WINS it was decided to introduce the teaching of cursive, from the first grade, aligning ourselves with the current of thought according to which postponing the teaching of cursive penalizes children, as it deprives them of the possibility of practicing important skills (phonological, visual-perceptual, motor, visual-spatial) and makes the process of acquiring the fine mobility required by italics more difficult. Furthermore, "lingering for a long time on the teaching of writing in capital letters can induce fixity on the fragmented and fragmented features of these characters and delay the intervention until the end of the acquisition of the mechanisms of reading writing" - Cristina Pendola - Teacher and Pedagogist Clinical

Among the considerations that support our Language Policy regarding the introduction of italics from the first grade we mention:

- the loss of italics is at the root of many Learning Disorders reported by Primary school teachers and which make the whole school path difficult ». "Writing in italics - explains Bianchi di Castelbianco - means translating thought into words, into semantic units, writing in print instead means dissecting it into letters, breaking it up, denying the time and breath of the sentence" - http://www.psicopedagogie.com/scrivere_corsivo.html
- "Today's children, adds Vandelli," rarely play like they did a few years ago and much less do they have the opportunity to experiment with the use of their hands and their bodies sufficiently to develop some prerequisites which are then fundamental for learning to write. Instead, they have the possibility, much more than in the past, of using technological tools, sometimes at a very early age. Motor coordination, spatiality and fine motor skills are connected to graphomotor skills of writing, all skills that are acquired in the developmental age also thanks to the ability to move, experience one's body in space and know how to manage it well in movement".

Students will be taught and encouraged to use Italian cursive at any stage of Primary. Individual case will be taken into account and students will be allowed to adopt the writing style they feel more confident with.

All students in MYP and DP will be encouraged to use cursive, although they will be given the choice of adopting the writing style they feel more confident about and that it is more functional to their academic goals.

Policy Review

The pedagogical leadership team, that includes the Academic Dean and the Academic program coordinators (PYP, MYP, DP) is in charge of the policy revision process.

The pedagogical leadership team will be drafting the policy on the basis of indications provided by IB documents. Teachers will be asked to provide feedback on the draft, and the policy will be updated accordingly if the input is consistent with IB guidelines and the school vision.

- The policy will be revised on a yearly basis and either confirmed as is or modified accordingly. The Academic Dean and the School manager will be in charge of approving the new version and sharing it with the school community through the school website and on Managebac.

The policy was last updated in July 2021

Bibliography

IB publications :

Guidelines for developing a school language policy (April 2008)

Language and Learning in the IB Programmes (September 2011)

Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB Programmes (April 2008)

IB: Programme Standards and Practices

MYP: From principles into Practice (August 2008)

SecondLanguageAcquisitionandMother-tongueDevelopment(January2004)

Towards a continuum of international education (September 2008).

Subject Guides(MYPLanguageAandB,DPLanguageA1,LanguageB,LanguageA: Literature, Language A: Language and Literature) Department for children, schools, and families (UK). *Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage: Setting the Standards for Learning, Development and Care for children from birth to five.* May 2008

The National Strategies Early Years. *Gateway to writing – Developing handwriting.* 2009

Department for Education. *National curriculum in England: English programmes of study - key stages 1 and 2.* September 2013

Primary Years Programme: Reviewing a language policy (December 2018)

Guidelines for school self-reflection on its language policy (IB, 2012)

A learning story about how a school's language policy supports multilingualism in a culturally diverse community (IB, 2012)
