

Language policy

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WINS Language Profile

English is the language of instruction at WINS, therefore every member of the school community is expected to use English as the main language of communication.

The school follows the IB approach to language teaching within the curriculum and through school-wide initiatives. The school is located in Italy, and has a diverse population comprising people from all over the world. The school is committed to providing a strong Italian language and cultural programme, which celebrates the values and heritage of the host country.

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

WINS Language Philosophy

The pedagogical team at WINS firmly believes that we must learn languages in order to use them. 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.

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. Teachers and staff 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.

In the spirit of the IB learner profile, we encourage our students to become principled communicators when interacting with peers, teachers, and school staff members. Students are encouraged to use kind and respectful language towards all members of the school community.

All IB teachers are language teachers.

At WINS, we believe that **"all teachers are responsible for language development of students"**.

To this purpose WINS promotes teachers use of a range best language practice to support English language acquisition: use of paraphrasing and graphic organizers, Reducing speech rate, collaborative learning, use of visual gestures and actions, etc.



Teachers support literacy across the curriculum in both L&L and LA subjects through modeling correct language use, provide opportunities to practice language skills, providing feedback on language performance.

Celebration and support of Home and family languages

WINS is committed to honor and support the students' home language through a range of initiatives:

The school offers English, Italian and Spanish as DP languages in Group 1. Other languages not included in the present Group 1 offer will be supported through the offering of self-taught language subjects.

In lower grade levels, students will have access to extra-curricular language courses (other than Spanish, German, English that are included in the curricular offer) organized by the school, contingent on the needs of specific groups in the school community.

Mother tongue languages and culture are celebrated during WINS International day and international mother tongue day activities.

In the MYP English and Italian native languages are supported through offering of L&L course in both languages.

The library provides texts (e.g., books, videos and audio books) in the mother tongues of the student body.

The library offers range of multilingual resources to support the learning of multiple languages, including mother tongue languages. The school also provide access to different electronic resources: reading apps, online encyclopedias, online magazines which offer access to information in languages other than English.

WINS teachers also include the following strategies in their teaching practice to prompt development of students' home languages: encourage students and parents to maintain their mother tongue(s) through parent education, highlight connections and encourage students to make connections between their mother tongue and languages taught at school.



English Entry Requirements (an inclusive approach)

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 about English entry requirements, refer to Admissions Policy.)

Students whose initial level of English is below the grade-working level will be enrolled in English EAL classes that are aimed at reaching a B1 level/PET by the end of Grade 7 and a B2 level/FCE by the latest by the end of IBDP Year 1. Return to mainstream English LA class will be subject to reaching the minimum language requirements for the age group. Each student's 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 6 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:

- **Grade 6:** A2 level of the European framework can be accepted.
- **Grades 7 and 8:** B1 level of the European framework, PET, or a passing mark on our placement test.
- **Grades 9 and 10:** B2 level of the European framework, First, or a passing mark on our placement test.
- **IBDP:** B2 level of the European framework, First, IGCSE English Second Language Grade C or equivalent, or a passing mark on our placement test.

Students will be tested for English proficiency using the Cambridge tests at the beginning of the school year. The purpose of this assessment is to identify any need for support before the beginning of the school year and organizing proper setting in Language acquisition classes (LA vs EAL).



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 and an inclusive environment. The languages of our school, the local community, and school families are celebrated and shared and we value the benefits of home languages. At the start of the school year, we ask PYP families to complete **Family Language Background Surveys** and encourage families to make connections to the learning at school in their home language and continue to support literacy in the home language. New students who are new to English are welcomed to the classroom and the teachers plan connections to the home languages. As such, children are encouraged to take pride in their home and family language throughout the school year and with a special focus during our Language month. 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. Throughout the school year, several initiatives take place to support multilingualism within the PYP, such as Language Week, Book Week, and International Day. In addition, there are classroom-level initiatives with which homeroom teachers encourage students' multilingual development and support connections between home and school languages: inviting parents to read in mother tongue, creating multilingual resources, and translating commonly used phrases.

To encourage students to reflect on their language use and encourage multilingual practices, each PYP class will collaboratively develop **class language policies** where students share their perceptions, experiences, and agreements about language with each other. The homeroom teachers will share the class language policies with the teaching team and classroom families.

Language Learning in the PYP

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 structured approach to language development.



Language instruction aims to develop students' reading and writing skills through phonics, grammar, guided reading, subject-specific vocabulary development by reading of a variety of texts, authentic writing experiences and writing for different purposes, the writing process, and creative expression. For our language learners, homeroom, subject and EAL teachers encourage **translanguaging** to support their learning.

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, small group and whole 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 Language Instruction

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. For our EAL program, the PYP follows The Bell Foundations EAL Assessment Framework for International Schools.

Starting in Kindergarten, phonics teaching follows the Jolly Phonics and Grammar programmes, providing a structured literacy foundation supporting word recognition and language comprehension. In our aim to strengthen our writing from PYP Transition to Grade 5, we adopted the Writing Workshop model, which includes narrative, descriptive, and opinion writing.

Italian Language Learning: Language 1 (L1) and Language Acquisition (LA)

All PYP students also have five periods of Italian lessons per week starting in the Early Years. In the PYP at WINS, we ensure that the Italian language is aligned with the learning goals of the Italian National Curriculum for native speakers, delivering its content through inquiry-based framework and approach.

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, while international students are offered Italian LA classes to support their learning of the new language and culture. However, individual in class and/or outside class support can be provided, upon agreement with the family, to students who need to move between the two levels.



Third Language Learning: German and Spanish

From first grade, primary students choose an additional language of study between Spanish and German, which will be their third language. Exceptions to this guideline will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Third language lessons are intended to be fun and interactive and expose the students to the language heritage and culture of Spanish- and German-speaking countries and people through hands-on and creative projects; song, music, poetry, and rhymes; and arts and crafts. Explicit grammar instruction is taught from the fifth grade to prepare the students for language learning in the MYP.

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 the Appendices.

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. Beginning in **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.

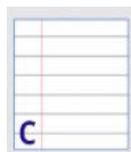
As print handwriting is explicitly taught in Kindergarten, Transition, and Grade 1, the expectation for handwriting in the homeroom will reflect the print letter formation.

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 nearly 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 print 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 print 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.

Requirements for lined paper for English-language classes (all classes aside from Italian):

English Language Lined Paper Requirements





- Transition to Grade 5: C-lines

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

Italian handwriting Policy

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

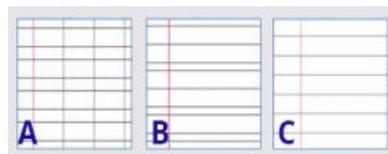
Italian teachers will indicate specific requirements on the beginning of the school year stationary request to families.

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

Italian Language Lined Paper Requirements

Choice of lines for Italian language classes:

1. Transition: handwriting packets; big squares
2. Grades 1-2: A-lines with vertical lines
3. Grade 3: B-lines
4. Grades 4-5: C-lines



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.



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 and/or our placement tests). (For further information, refer to the WINS 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 Italian 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 being accepted into 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 and their students. For example: Students might be put in an Italian language acquisition course on entrance to the school and then move to an Italian L&L course at a later stage, according to their progress. Vice versa, 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

Students will choose their language acquisition in G6 and are encouraged to keep the same subject until grade 8. Change of subject is discouraged during Lower MYP.



Students are given the possibility to change their LA subject in Grade 9, but they will not be allowed to change again their choice until Grade 11.

Students who need English EAL classes, may be asked to reduce the number of LA languages studied from 2 to 1, to attend English reinforcement classes.

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 specific 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 will automatically move to a higher phase after successful completion of the learning objectives of each phase.

Students in phase 5 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 6 at MYP level will allow students to register for a group 1 language if required by their study plan.

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 in the DP

The school is non-selective except for 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 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 to the DP, successful completion of phase 6 at MYP level will allow students to register for a group 1 language if required by their study plan.

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
- Spanish A Literature SL
- English B HL
- Italian B HL/SL

- Italian ab-initio
- German B HL/SL
- Spanish B HL/SL

The subject offer in Group 2 can vary over time, depending on students' request.

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, non-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.



Policy Review

The Senior Leadership Team oversee the policy revision process that involves the Program Coordinators, and the teachers. At the end of each academic year teachers will be asked to provide their feedback on the policy and suggest any updates/amendments that they see fit.

The SLT will investigate teachers' feedback and will update the policy considering their suggestions. They will update the policy based on indications provided by IB documents, to ensure that school procedures are in line with IB most recent publications. The amendments added to the Policy will be shared with the teachers at the beginning of each school year, and teachers will be asked to formally agree on these policies.

The most updated version of the policy is made available to teachers and all stakeholders on Managebac. Parents will be asked to formally acknowledge the policies published on Managebac. This Policy was last updated in August 2023.



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 (April 2020)
- MYP: From principles into Practice (August 2008)
- SecondLanguageAcquisitionandMother-tongueDevelopment (January2004)
- Towards a continuum of international education (September 2008)
- Subject Guides (MYP language A and B, DP Language A1, Language B, Language A: 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 (IBO, 2012)

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

The Bell Foundation: EAL Assessment Framework for International Schools (2019)

Jolly Phonics and Grammar Guidelines