

# Policy: **IB Diploma**

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## Language Policy



**St Edward's  
College**

Founded 1929

# Who we are

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## Mission Statement

At St Edward's College we strive to create exemplary citizens in this increasingly globalised and technological world, placing strong emphasis on character formation, genuine intercultural understanding and leadership skills which will assist them to contribute to the well-being of society.

## About us

St Edwards is an Independent private school which accepts students from Early Childhood to IBDP Sixth Form. We have a modern boarding section for students age 11 years up. Our educational experience has shaped us into the person we are today. Whether we learned from our own experiences, from our parents, grandparents, friends or teachers, we have gone through the 'learning experience'. Dedicated, caring and experienced professionals are the key to our success. The underlying approach to all lessons throughout St Edward's is simple. We do not want our students to solely learn, unless there is understanding of a concept/topic there is little point in learning and to understand one needs to think. Hence, TUL - Think, Understand, Learn.

At St Edward's we deliver our lessons with the most current, tried and proven international methodologies.

# Language Policy

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## **Philosophy of language teaching and learning**

At St Edward's College, we create a challenging and motivating multilingual environment where the language of instruction is English. This means that all languages except those from Group 2 (language acquisition) will be taught in English. We believe that every student has an individual and a cultural set of experiences, skills and interests, which must be considered in the teaching and learning process. 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.



All teachers in their own area are aware of multilingualism and sensitive to the additional needs of some students who would have difficulties in understanding the subject taught in English.

Through the IB language programmes, we aim to develop confident, curious, highly proficient and enthusiastic readers, writers, viewers, presenters, speakers and listeners. Language is always taught meaningfully and in context. 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 help move them forward.

St Edward's College focuses on the trans-disciplinary nature of language learning by recognising and modelling the role of language in each subject as well as in the language of instruction, host country language and in other languages, and by developing an understanding of the IB objectives and pedagogical language of the programmes.

When students are acquiring a language, our teaching aims at developing skill acquisition and is informed by incorporating four concepts: context, culture, reflection and fluency. Students are encouraged to think for themselves, recognize patterns, develop theories and construct meaning as they investigate language.

As students progress, teachers enable them to see language as a means of self-expression, exploration of self and others, as context driven, having multiple meanings, and involving at all levels of discourse a personal stance, from simple communication to the core of academic language.



## Host country Language

The IB program emphasizes an importance on learning host country language alongside the acquisition of new languages and the further development of mother tongues. The official languages of Malta are Maltese and English.

As a school, we are strongly committed to providing students with access to English language learning and utilising Malta and the community for language and cultural experiences throughout the curriculum. Equally important to the school is the belief that each student should have the opportunity to discover Maltese culture and its heritage and maintain and develop English at the same time.

The acquisition of additional languages allows students to further reflect upon and explore different cultural perspectives. Mother tongues Mother tongue development is necessary for cultural identity. Therefore, the school recognizes and supports the mother tongue of each student.

We encourage students to share their culture along with and through their language. Students who do not speak English as their native language may opt to study their mother tongue via the school supported self-taught program.



## **Aim**

To support the Language development of IB students.

## **Scope**

This policy applies to the IB students and teachers with regards to the choices as well as the teaching and learning of Languages at IBDP level

## **Definitions**

Language A – Studies in language and literature at first language level

Language B – Studies in Language Acquisition

Ab initio – Language Acquisition from no foundational knowledge

Self taught Literature A – First language literature course in the students native language studied independently by the student but supported by the school.

## **Responsibilities and Links**

DP Coordinator:

- To meet with students and parents on admission to discuss the language options and profile of the student to correctly place the student in the appropriate language choice and level.

Subject Teachers:

- To inform and aid the coordinator on the correct level placing of students.

Parents

- To aid the coordinator in correctly placing the student in the correct level. Also, supporting students development of their native tongue especially those continuing with the School supported self taught program.

## **Procedures**

### **Language selection**

At the initial meeting with students and parents where the subject choices are discussed. The DP coordinator will work with the students and parents to assess the students language profile and levels in order to correctly place the student in the right level. This could involve determining a students oral and written fluency to decide whether a student should be doing a language at Language B or Language A level. Parents are to support this process by being honest and providing language support to students taking self-taught Language A.

### **Self-Taught Tutors**

During the subject selection interview, the DP coordinator will discuss the language choices and options. If studying self-taught literature is the suitable choice, students will have lessons with a school tutor who will support them compiling a booklist and teach literary skills.

The school will aid the student in finding tutors wherever necessary however ultimately it is the responsibility of the Student to secure a tutor to help them. Students may find a tutor through IB partners such as MIH unlimited.

### **Pre-Requisite Level of English**

As per IB Admissions Policy In order to gain admittance to the IB Programme, students must either:

- Have English as their mother tongue
- Be in possession of an English O level at SEC or IGCSE or hold the certificate from the country where they sat the equivalent examination.
- Students who are not in possession of an English O level at SEC or IGCSE must hold certification in English at a B2 level or an IELTS score of 5.5.



## **Language Acquisition**

Students who opt to study English A Language & Literature in Group 1 may opt to study French, Italian or Spanish which are offered at Language B or Ab initio level in Group 2. Those who opt for the school support self-taught language program must take English B as their language acquisition choice. These students are then supported by the EAL/TEFL program.

## **IB Language Acquisition Policy (French, Italian Spanish)**

### **Ab Initio Level**

Ab Initio level has no previous knowledge of the language as stated in the guide.

Requirement: not living in the country of the spoken language during the last 5 years. Students with any language certification, including private institutions and introductory courses, are not allowed to take that language at Ab Initio level.



## **Language B Standard Level**

Students who wish to take SL have to reach an understandable level of the language to select this course. In order for students to succeed at this level they must be in possession of suitable grades at either MATSEC or IGCSE level. Other official certifications include (DELF, DELE, CILS) level B1.

It is up to teacher's discretion in the first two weeks to inform the IB Coordinator whether a student is in the most suitable level. In such case, teacher's recommendation for switching between AB and SL, or to another language, are to be strongly considered. If need be, or in case of any resistance from student or parents, level is to be determined by the teacher by, but not not restricted to, a written or oral test, this also including a number of regular home tasks which may be given to student for assessment purposes. This is to avoid students from cheating their way into lower levels below their standard, as to have a good final mark with little effort. Time frame for switching language is to be fixed just before the first Mid-term holidays (early November).



## **Compliance**

The DP coordinator and Language teachers will communicate throughout the first 6 weeks to ensure that correct subject and level placement is correct.

## **References**

SEC Admissions Policy

IB [DP language courses: overview and placement guidance](#)