

THE FALCON SCHOOL



Language Policy

Middle Years Programme & Diploma Programme

Academic Year 2026–2027

This Language Policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. Any necessary revisions will be made in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

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Introduction

The MYP defines the nature of Language Acquisition thus, quoting Savignon (1983):

“Learning to speak another’s language means taking one’s place in the human community. It means reaching out to others across cultural and linguistic boundaries. Language is far more than a system to be explained. It is our most important link to the world around us. Language is culture in motion. It is people interacting with people.”

Furthermore, *What is an IB education?* (2013, updated 2017) asserts that:

“The ability to communicate in a variety of modes in more than one language is essential to the concept of an international education that promotes multilingualism and intercultural understanding, both of which are central to the IB’s mission. All IB programmes require the students to study, or study in, more than one language because we believe that communicating in more than one language provides excellent opportunities to develop intercultural understanding and respect.”

The study of additional languages in the MYP and DP provides students with the opportunity to develop insights into the features, processes, and craft of language and the concept of culture, and to realize that there are diverse ways of living, behaving, and viewing the world.

The acquisition of the language of a community and the possibilities to reflect upon and explore cultural perspectives of our own and other communities:

- are valued as central to developing critical thinking, and are considered essential for the cultivation of intercultural awareness and the development of internationally-minded, responsible members of local, national, and global communities
- are integral to exploring and sustaining personal development and cultural identity, and provide an intellectual framework to support conceptual development
- greatly contribute to the holistic development of students and to the strengthening of lifelong learning skills
- equip students with the necessary skills, attitudes, and intercultural communicative competence, enabling them to communicate successfully across various contexts, mediate between diverse cultures, and build global understanding.

Alignment of the Falcon School and IB Missions

The Falcon School and the International Baccalaureate aim to develop inquiring, knowledgeable, and principled young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

IB Learner Profile

The IB learner profile is a set of attributes that the IB aspires to develop in students. These attributes are to be: inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced, and reflective.

Policy Statement

The Falcon School views linguistic diversity at our school as a rich resource for achieving the ideals of intercultural understanding and international mindedness. We believe that the maintenance and development of language is crucial to cognitive development and maintaining cultural identity. Language is central to inquiry, communication and self-expression in every area of the curriculum and all aspects of life. Thus, the development of language is viewed as a **shared responsibility** of all members of the Falcon School learning community.

The Falcon School recognises multilingualism as a fact, a right and a resource for learning. The linguistic diversity of our students is valued and used, where appropriate, to support learning, intercultural understanding, identity and international-mindedness. Students are encouraged to maintain and develop their home language(s) alongside the language of instruction and additional languages studied at school.

The Language Policy applies across both the Middle Years Programme (MYP) and Diploma Programme (DP). Language development is a shared responsibility of all teachers. Subject teachers therefore support students in developing the academic and subject-specific language required to access the curriculum, communicate their understanding and progress successfully from the MYP into the DP.

1. MYP Language and Literature

English is the primary medium for teaching and learning at the Falcon School. The aims and objectives of teaching English are:

AIMS

- to encourage personal confidence and competence through effective and accurate expression in both spoken and written language
- to develop critical judgement in reading
- to increase appreciation of the richness of language and literature
- to enable effective communication in a variety of situations
- to promote independent learning
- to encourage the enjoyment of reading
- to expand awareness of cultural contexts, both one's own and those of others within the whole of the human experience
- to explore the developing relationship between oneself and the world, both real and imaginative, through thoughtful reading

OBJECTIVES

- to extend the range of varieties of spoken and written English competence through formal speaking and writing assignments, and informal question and answer
- to develop understanding of the different ways in which meaning is conveyed through knowledge of grammatical forms and varieties of usage
- to develop awareness of audience and appropriate style of communication
- to develop language capabilities, which enable understanding, interpretation and evaluation of communication
- to gain in-depth knowledge of set texts
- to research the backgrounds of set texts
- to acquire the skills of literary analysis
- to be able to make value judgements on literary material

All students, on entering the first year of the Secondary Department (MYP Year 1) follow the core English Language and Literature course. Provision is made for students who are experiencing difficulties (see **6**, *below*).

2. MYP Language Acquisition Aims

The aims of the teaching and learning of MYP language acquisition are to:

- gain proficiency in an additional language while supporting maintenance of their home tongue and cultural heritage
- develop a respect for, and understanding of, diverse linguistic and cultural heritages
- develop the student's communication skills necessary for further language learning, and for study, work and leisure in a range of authentic contexts and for a variety of audiences and purposes
- enable the student to develop multiliteracy skills through the use of a range of learning tools, such as multimedia, in the various modes of communication
- enable the student to develop an appreciation of a variety of literary and non-literary texts and to develop critical and creative techniques for comprehension and construction of meaning
- enable the student to recognize and use language as a vehicle of thought, reflection, self-expression and learning in other subjects, and as a tool for enhancing literacy
- enable the student to understand the nature of language and the process of language learning, which comprises the integration of linguistic, cultural and social components
- offer insight into the cultural characteristics of the communities where the language is spoken
- encourage an awareness and understanding of the perspectives of people from their own and other cultures, leading to involvement and action in their own and other communities

- foster curiosity, inquiry and a lifelong interest in, and enjoyment of, language learning.

3. DP Language Placement and Appropriate Challenge

Appropriate placement in Diploma Programme language courses is essential to ensure that each student is both adequately prepared and appropriately challenged. Student preference is considered alongside the student's linguistic background, previous language-learning experience, level of proficiency, previous school records, teacher recommendations and, where necessary, diagnostic assessment.

Students entering a Studies in Language and Literature course (Group 1) should have the linguistic and academic proficiency required to study literature and/or language at the appropriate level. Language B is intended for students who have previous experience of learning the target language, while Language ab initio is intended for students with little or no previous experience of the language.

Placement decisions are made in consultation with the student, parents, subject teachers and DP Coordinator. Students will not be placed in a language course solely for the purpose of maximising grades. Placement must reflect the student's previous experience and provide an appropriate level of academic challenge in accordance with IB requirements.

Language choices made during the MYP are therefore considered carefully in relation to students' intended DP pathways. Students and parents receive guidance regarding appropriate progression from MYP Language and Literature and Language Acquisition courses into DP language courses.

4. The Falcon School Language Profile

The Falcon School is an English-medium school with a diverse student body. Some 70% of students have Modern Greek as their home language, although they (and their parents) have elected that they be educated in English.

All students learn in English and follow one of two pathways in Greek, either Greek Language and Literature which prepares students for the Cyprus Government qualification for home language speakers; or Greek Language Acquisition. Additional languages, French* and Spanish*, are introduced as students progress through the school.

The chart below summarises the availability of Language and Literature and Language Acquisition as students progress through the MYP:

	MYP 1	MYP 2	MYP 3	MYP 4	MYP 5
English Language & Literature	All	All	All	All	All

Greek Language & Literature	All home language Greek speakers	All home language Greek speakers	All home language Greek speakers	All home language Greek speakers	All home language Greek speakers
Language Acquisition (Greek)	All non-home language Greek learners	All non-home language Greek learners	All non-home language Greek learners	All non-home language Greek learners	All non-home language Greek learners
Language Acquisition (French)	All non-home language Greek learners	All	All	Elective	Elective
Language Acquisition (Spanish)	All	All non-home language Greek learners	All non-home language Greek learners	Elective	Elective

4.1 Diploma Programme Language Provision

In the Diploma Programme, all students study at least one subject from Group 1: Studies in Language and Literature and normally one subject from Group 2: Language Acquisition. Where appropriate, a student may study two Group 1 languages in place of a Group 2 subject, in accordance with IB Diploma Programme requirements.

The school provides language pathways according to student need, linguistic background, staffing and viable class sizes. The precise languages and levels offered in each academic year are published in the school's DP Brochure. Students and parents receive guidance before final subject choices are confirmed to ensure that students select an appropriate language pathway.

4.2 School-Supported Self-Taught Language A

Where a student's strongest or home language is not offered as a taught Group 1 course by the school, the school will consider whether a school-supported self-taught Language A: Literature SL pathway is appropriate and feasible, in accordance with current IB requirements.

The DP Coordinator will determine suitability in consultation with the student, parents and relevant staff. Where this pathway is offered, the school will provide appropriate supervision, guidance and monitoring and will support the student in accessing suitable texts and resources. Students and parents will be informed clearly of the independent learning demands associated with the course.

The DP Coordinator and language teachers consider each student's previous language-learning experience and proficiency when advising on placement at SL or HL and on the suitability of Language A, Language B or Language ab initio.

At DP, students follow a course from **Group 1** (either SL or HL) and a course from **Group 2** (either SL or HL)*. In some cases, students may offer 2 courses from **Group 1**.

All **Group 1** and **Group 2** courses are framed to develop receptive, productive, and interactive skills, in accordance with the principles outlined in Subject Guides and Subject Briefs, available on the IB website (www.ibo.org). Further guidance is included in the Falcon School DP Brochure.

*Acquiring additional languages enriches personal abilities and promotes for internationally minded students. The aim of this language policy is to develop linguistically capable students who are able to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing.

4.3 Home Language Development

The Falcon School recognises that the maintenance and development of a student's home language supports identity, cognitive development, additional language acquisition and intercultural understanding. Students and families are therefore encouraged to maintain and develop their home language(s), including literacy, alongside English and other languages studied at school.

In addition to English and Greek, students' home languages include Chinese, Russian, Ukrainian, Arabic, among others, reflecting the school's broad, international student body. Where a student's home language is not taught by the school, the school will, where reasonably possible, help families identify appropriate external, community or online language-learning opportunities. Students may also be encouraged to use appropriate multilingual resources to support learning, while ensuring that assessed work meets the language requirements of the relevant subject and programme.

Where appropriate, the school will explore opportunities for students to continue their home language within their Diploma Programme studies, including suitable Group 1 pathways.

4.4 Legal and Regulatory Framework

The Falcon School implements this policy within the legal and regulatory framework applicable to private schools in the Republic of Cyprus, regarding Language instruction.

Where national requirements and IB requirements both apply, the school will seek to meet both sets of obligations. The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for ensuring that the school's language teaching practices remain consistent with regulations laid down by the Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture.

5. The Importance of Language

The Falcon School believes that language is essential to all learning; therefore, all teachers in the school are considered to be language teachers to some extent. At DP level especially, teachers aim to scaffold academic language skills for all students. Our goal is for students to:

- Learn a language, as students use it to communicate in increasingly sophisticated ways progressing from MYP1 to DP2
- Learn about language, as students continue to develop an understanding of how language works.
- Learn through language, as students use it as a tool to understand, think, and reflect.

5.1 Language Across the Curriculum

All MYP and DP teachers have responsibility for supporting the language development of their students. This does not mean that all teachers are language specialists; rather, teachers explicitly support the language students need to access and communicate learning within their subject disciplines.

Teachers support language development by:

- explicitly teaching and reinforcing subject-specific vocabulary and terminology;
- explaining and modelling IB command terms;
- modelling appropriate academic writing, speaking and presentation;
- scaffolding complex texts and tasks where appropriate;
- providing opportunities for students to develop reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing skills;
- using visual, digital and contextual resources to support comprehension;
- providing constructive feedback that supports increasingly accurate and effective communication; and
- gradually reducing scaffolding as students develop greater independence.

In the Diploma Programme, particular attention is given to the development of the academic language required for extended writing, critical analysis, argument, research, presentations and subject-specific communication.

6. Support for students who are not proficient in English

As English is the principal language of instruction at The Falcon School, students must be supported in developing the English proficiency necessary to access the curriculum successfully. Language needs may be identified through admissions information, previous school records, entry assessments, diagnostic assessment, teacher observation and ongoing assessment.

Students requiring additional support may receive individual or small-group English-language support according to identified need and available provision. Within mainstream lessons, teachers use appropriate strategies including differentiation, scaffolding, modelling, explicit vocabulary instruction, visual resources, guided reading and writing, and additional opportunities for clarification and practice.

Student progress is monitored by subject teachers and relevant support staff, and the level of support is reviewed according to the student's developing proficiency and academic needs.

Language support continues into the Diploma Programme where required. DP teachers recognise that students may be conversationally fluent in English while still requiring support with the increasingly sophisticated academic language associated with their subjects.

7. Student Language Profiles and Admissions

The school seeks to understand each student's linguistic background from the point of admission. Information gathered may include the student's home language(s), previous language(s) of instruction, languages previously studied, length and level of previous language study, English proficiency and relevant educational background.

This information, together with entry assessment and teacher observations where appropriate, helps the school determine suitable language placement and support. Language profiles are reviewed as students progress through the school and are particularly important when advising students about MYP and DP language pathways.

8. Language Resources

The Falcon School provides physical and digital resources to support language development across the MYP and DP. These include age- and programme-appropriate literature, reference materials, dictionaries, digital resources, multimedia

materials and authentic texts. Students are taught to select and use language resources appropriately and responsibly.

The school reviews its language resources as the MYP and DP develop and seeks to ensure that resources support the linguistic diversity of the school community, the languages offered by the school and the requirements of IB courses. Where appropriate, assistive technology and other resources are provided in accordance with the school's Inclusion Policy.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

Effective implementation of the Language Policy is a shared responsibility across the school community.

School Leadership ensures appropriate staffing, and professional development and resources. IB approved PD is funded for teachers (including the Librarian as an important stakeholder in Language development). The SLT oversees implementation and review of this Language Policy, which is a working document, available to and involving all members of staff.

The MYP and DP Coordinators ensure that language provision and practices are consistent with IB requirements and support appropriate student pathways through the programmes.

Language teachers assess students' linguistic development, provide appropriate language instruction and advise on placement and progression.

All subject teachers support the development of the academic and subject-specific language students require to access learning and communicate understanding.

The School Librarian supports the development of academic and subject-specific language by ensuring that available resources are sufficient for, or exceed, students' needs.

Students are expected to engage actively in developing their language skills, use language responsibly and respect the linguistic and cultural diversity of others.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to support students' language development, including the maintenance and development of home languages, and to work with the school when decisions concerning language placement or additional support are required. Parents are involved when language pathway decisions are made (for instance, in MYP4 option choices, and DP Group 1 / Group 2 choices).

10. Language and Assessment

Assessment of language in both the MYP and DP follows the requirements of the relevant IB subject guides and The Falcon School Assessment Policy. Assessment is criterion-related and provides students with opportunities to demonstrate their developing knowledge, understanding and communication skills.

In MYP Language and Literature and Language Acquisition, students are assessed using the prescribed MYP subject-group criteria. A range of formative and summative assessment strategies is used to support language development and determine student achievement.

In the Diploma Programme, assessment in Group 1 and Group 2 language courses follows the requirements of the relevant IB subject guide. Students experience appropriate formative assessment throughout the course and are prepared for the required internal and external assessment components.

Teachers recognise that language proficiency can affect a student's ability to demonstrate understanding across all subject groups. Appropriate scaffolding and language support are therefore provided during teaching and learning without altering the academic standards or assessment criteria of the programme.

Full assessment procedures, including reporting, predicted grades and internal and external assessment practices, are detailed in The Falcon School Assessment Policy.

11. Relationship with Other School Policies

The Language Policy forms part of The Falcon School's wider framework of IB policies and should be read alongside the school's:

- Assessment Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Academic Integrity Policy
- Admissions Policy

These policies work together to ensure equitable access to the MYP and DP, appropriate language support, fair assessment practices and the development of responsible, independent learners.

Since the linguistic composition of the student body is fluid and changes over time, the Falcon School acknowledges that the languages offered and the support structures described in this policy will adapt.

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