



# Language Policy

Guidelines for members of the  
Middle school community

*This document has been prepared by the school's MYP Coordinator along with a team comprising administrators and teachers.*

*Date created: Dec 2023*

*Last reviewed: Dec 2023*



## **1. Policy Statement**

At DES Middle School, language is fundamental to our educational framework, serving as the basic means of communication, thus fostering deep understanding, and facilitating academic development. Similar to our Primary Years Programme (PYP), language holds a pivotal role in shaping students' holistic growth.

## **2. Philosophy**

We acknowledge that language has a multifaceted nature and therefore, serves as more than a mere tool for communication. It stands as a gateway to exploring ideas, expressing thoughts, and engaging in critical inquiry. In alignment with our educational philosophy, language acquisition is viewed as a continuous journey that encloses individual, familial, and cultural identities. Through language students inquire, reflect and express themselves across all disciplines. It enables them to explore varied perspectives, and encourages them to think critically and reflect on their learning experiences.

At our bilingual school, while English and Greek serve as the primary languages of instruction, we highly value multilingualism and are dedicated to offering diverse and effective language instruction to support our students from a young age.

With regards to language proficiency, we acknowledge that it goes beyond linguistic abilities to developing intercultural competence, empathy, and appreciation for diverse perspectives and therefore cultures. This aligns seamlessly with the IB's principles of developing internationally minded individuals who contribute positively to a global community.

In summary, language within our setting transcends linguistic boundaries. It provides a significant opportunity to nurture open-mindedness, foster meaningful dialogue, and enhance academic excellence. Through language students are empowered to reflect the learner's profiles by becoming effective communicators, principled individuals, reflective thinkers, and lifelong learners, enriching their educational journey and preparing them to thrive in the modern world.

## **3. Beliefs**

In our school we share some common beliefs regarding Language:

- All teachers are regarded as language educators.
- Language proficiency influences communication and social-emotional well-being.
- It is of significant importance to uphold the value of every language spoken within our school community. We celebrate and honor the rich tapestry of languages represented among our students, faculty, and families.
- We believe in fostering the development of a high-level thinking language for each student.
- Students must be assisted to develop competence across the four language modes of speaking, listening, reading and writing
- students are to learn at least one language in addition to their mother tongue
- We support providing opportunities for students to develop their mother tongue.
- We endorse cultivating competence across speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

## **4. Languages offered in the curriculum**

### **i. Main languages of instruction**

DES Middle School is a bilingual school, with the two main languages of instruction being English and Greek. English are primarily used for most subjects. However, we offer Language and Literature classes both in Greek and English, since these are the two formal languages of instruction and most students are bilingual.

In addition to regular instruction of Greek (Language and literature), we devote one day per week to teaching Math and Science in Greek. This dedicated time helps students familiarize themselves with subject-specific Greek terminology, enabling a more nuanced understanding of these disciplines.



## **ii. Language acquisition**

In our school, the language policy is a testament to our commitment to nurturing multilingualism and fostering a deep appreciation for diverse linguistic backgrounds. We firmly believe in providing a platform where students are encouraged to develop proficiency in multiple languages, while honoring their individual identities and cultural heritage.

As part of the “Language Acquisition” subject the school offers three languages for students to choose from: German, French, and Spanish. Students coming from DES Primary School have a very good level in one of those languages since they were offered daily in the curriculum. The students coming to our school from other schools will be assessed at the beginning of the year and will be assigned to a phase according to their level. Teachers will use differentiated approach when teaching Language Acquisition in order to accommodate all students according to their level. The aim is to teach these subjects as much in the target language as the students’ level of independence will allow. In the future, when the school’s number of students increases, we will rethink the option of having separate language acquisition classes according to the phases of the students.

## **5. Disciplines**

In alignment with the school's commitment to personalized learning, DES Middle School provides students with an opportunity for specialization during the concluding hours of the day. These dedicated 1.5 hours offer disciplinary pursuits, allowing students to select their preferred disciplines.

The available specializations encompass Greek, Maths & Sciences, Sports, and Art & Design. This provision is designed to cater to diverse student preferences and academic aspirations. For instance, students aiming to pursue further education in a Greek high school have the option to intensify their Greek language studies during middle school. This strategic approach aims to boost their proficiency to a level enabling successful completion of Greek final exams by the culmination of their high school education.

Furthermore, the students have the option of choosing a combination of disciplines that they will attend throughout the week. Should a student wish to transition to different disciplines entirely, a meeting with the school's Principal and/or MYP Coordinator can be arranged. This discussion allows students to articulate the reasons behind their desired change, ensuring a thoughtful and supported decision-making process.

## **6. Support for Multilingualism**

To support students with limited English proficiency, we scaffold their instruction, guiding them toward independence within an English language environment through differentiated teaching at an appropriate academic level. Additionally, in instances where students exhibit significantly low English proficiency, an ESL (English as a Second Language) class will be made available. This course aims to expedite their English language acquisition, enabling enhanced participation and comprehension of the broader curriculum.

Similarly, for children arriving to our school from overseas who encounter challenges with the Greek language, a Greek as a Second Language class will be provided. This specialized course aims to support their language acquisition, addressing the difficulties they may encounter while integrating into the Greek-speaking environment.

## **7. Student Language Profile Collection**

The school compiles data on students' language backgrounds, encompassing their native language, languages spoken at home, languages studied during primary school, and any additional languages previously learned. This data is stored in the student information database managed by the office administration.

## 8. Responsibilities

Language-Related Responsibilities	Staff Members/Positions
Taught Language Curriculum	Principal/Vice-Principal, MYP Coordinator, Subject Teachers
Identification for English Language Support	Subject Teachers, Head of English department
Identification for Greek Language Support	Subject Teachers, Head of Greek department
Identification for Third Language Support	Language Teachers
Identification and Testing of Language Needs for New Admissions	Principal/ Vice-Principal, MYP Coordinator
Development of Mother Tongue Provisions	Language Teachers, Head of English and Head of Greek department
Review of School-Wide Language Policy	MYP Coordinator, Principal

## 9. Differentiation

In our Middle Years Programme (MYP)\*, differentiation is essential, especially within language acquisition classes where students may belong to different phases of language proficiency. Our teachers adeptly employ differentiation strategies to tailor their instruction and materials, ensuring alignment with each student's language proficiency level. This approach facilitates personalized learning experiences, enabling students to progress at their own pace while receiving the support they need to thrive.

Moreover, for those students aspiring to undertake exams, our school encourages and actively supports them. Just as in the Primary Years Programme (PYP), the language acquisition teachers work closely with these students, providing guidance, resources, and assistance to help them prepare effectively for their examinations, fostering an environment where each student can reach their full potential.

### Sources

This document has been produced in alignment with other IB publications:

Towards a continuum of international education

Programme standards and practices

IB learner profile booklet

Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB programmes

MYP: From principles into practice

**\*DES Middle School is a candidate school for the MYP. This school is pursuing authorization as an IB® World School. IB® World Schools share a common philosophy- a commitment to high-quality, challenging, international education- that we believe is important for our students.**

**\*Only schools authorized by the IB® Organization can offer any of its four academic programmes: the Primary Years Programme (PYP), the Middle Years Programme (MYP), the Diploma Programme (DP), or the Career-related Programme (CP). Candidate status gives no guarantee that authorization will be granted.**