



**Anton Bruckner International School
Linz, Austria**



Anton Bruckner International School

Language Policy



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1. Introduction

Our school language policy describes the beliefs and practices governing language learning at ABIS. This policy was developed in collaboration and consultation with all teaching staff at our school. It applies to the Primary and Middle Years Programmes and it serves as a basis for decision-making relating to language development and implementation at our school.

IB Standards and Practices Pertaining to Language

(0301-04)	The school implements, communicates and regularly reviews a language policy that helps to foster intercultural understanding through communicating in a variety of ways in more than one language
(0301-04-0100)	The school implements and reviews a language policy that is aligned with IB language policy guidelines.
(0301-04-0200)	The school describes in its language policy the way that the school recognizes multilingualism as a fact, a right and a resource for learning.
(0301-04-0300)	The school identifies in its language policy a variety of physical and virtual resources used to facilitate language development.
(0301-04-0400)	The school clearly describes in its language policy the rights and responsibilities of all members of the school community and what constitutes good practice within the school context.
(0301-04-0411)	PYP: The school ensures that students learn a language in addition to the language of instruction, at least from the age of seven; multilingual programmes where students are learning at least two languages can but are not required to offer additional languages.
(0301-06-0600)	The school considers international-mindedness in all its IB-mandated policies.
(0301-06-0700)	The pedagogical leadership team uses the school's IB-mandated policies in decision-making and curriculum development.

2. General Information

2.1 Statement of purpose

A language policy is an action statement. It is concerned less with where the students in a school are going, and more with how they are going to get there (Corson 199, qtd. in IBO 2008). ABIS Language Policy is intended to articulate our school's linguistic and academic goals and outlines our plan of action to help students attain these goals. We provide an international education for students coming from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Therefore, we also adhere to the IB philosophy on language, which aims to promote multilingualism as a fundamental part of increasing intercultural understanding and international-mindedness. Our language policy is a working document which has been developed by ABIS's teaching community. It is a statement of agreement which we expect all our staff to commit to so that our school can fulfill its linguistic goals and academic goals.

2.2 Our philosophy of language

At ABIS, language is at the heart of all learning throughout the curriculum. As an international community, we foster an inclusive environment where students of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds can flourish and develop as life-long learners.

We value multilingualism as an important part of students' overall cognitive development. We strongly promote the maintenance and development of our students' mother tongues because we believe it plays a crucial role in helping them learn other languages as well as preserving their linguistic heritage. Language development at ABIS is the responsibility of all teachers and is delivered through a holistic approach which transcends disciplines.

Teachers work with students to develop age-appropriate competency in the core skills of reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing. By building a strong foundation in language at our school, we empower our students with the ability to think and to learn, to develop social skills and values, and to acquire knowledge. It allows us to connect to one another, seek solutions to problems, resolve differences, and cooperate towards building a better community. Language makes it possible for us to inquire, laugh, share and truly maximize our learning experiences through life.

3. Guiding Principles

At ABIS our approach to language is guided by the following beliefs that:

- Language development forms the foundation for all learning and education. All teachers should actively promote language learning in their subject-specific area.
- Well-developed language skills are essential to open, honest, and clear communication.
- A person's mother tongue is a direct link to that person's culture, heritage, and identity.
- Parents have a central role to play in promoting the learning of their child's mother-tongue and other languages in the home context.
- Multilingualism is a critical component of success in the globalised world that we live in.
- Language learners learn better when the target language is taught in a meaningful and authentic context.
- Language helps forge social relationships and cope with the practical expectations of life.
- Students should be given the opportunity to reflect on their own growth in the process of learning a new language.
- Students should receive differentiated instruction according to their language needs.
- Special accommodation should be made for students who are not proficient in the language of instruction.
- Instructional methods should include inquiry-based language lessons.
- Each student acquires language differently according to his/her learning style, ability, experiences and pace.
- All staff, including administration, teachers and librarians, should attend language professional development sessions to keep up to date with new developments in language learning and teaching methods.
- A wide range of assessment strategies should be employed when assessing students' progress in language learning.

4. Language Teaching and Learning

At ABIS, the teaching of language builds upon the previous experience, needs and interests of the learners. Teaching and learning in PYP 1 to MYP 5 is based on the Language Scope and Sequence documents.

4.1 Language learning and the IB

- reflect on their learning and self-assess
- use language within meaningful contexts and across curricula
- participate in school wide reading initiatives and poetry slams
- present their opinions, work and the work of others
- use music and the arts to increase vocabulary and develop language
- reflect on language through comparisons with foreign languages

4.2 Approaches to learning

- presenting language through meaningful authentic contexts
- integrating language and other subject areas
- assisting students in discovering and practicing language structures
- encouraging students to reflect on language and develop language awareness (including but not limited to form and audience)
- recognising and respecting the different ways in which students express themselves
- fostering mother tongue development
- providing students with a physical environment, which enriches their language development
- supporting the development of positive attitudes toward improving communication skills and provide a wide range of opportunities to do so
- using a wide range of teaching and assessment strategies within a balanced language program that includes listening, viewing, speaking, reading, and writing

- providing challenges to students which allow opportunities for them to reach their full potential
- acknowledging differences in developmental stages, learning styles, as well as, previous language experiences

4.3 Staff responsibilities

- implement unit plans and weekly plans, based on the curricula
- serve as facilitators to language acquisition
- run in-class libraries
- implement transdisciplinary units of study
- engage students in cooperative discussions
- model effective reading, speaking, writing and listening skills
- provide opportunities to present, research and read aloud
- express feelings and opinions and encourage others to do the same
- encourage parental involvement through initiatives such as parent readers, guest speakers, international day, PYP5 Exhibition, Personal Project Exhibition

5. The Primary Years Programme (PYP)

5.1 PYP language acquisition

English	German	Spanish
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learners with little or no ability in English are identified by the admissions officer and/ or classroom teachers and individually assessed by the ESOL teacher to ascertain the amount and nature of the support required.• Students receive individualized or small-group English and academic support during class time.• Additionally, students receive in-class support, one-to-one teacher support and are presented with the possibility of after-school ESOL clubs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The aim is that all students acquire an acceptable standard of proficiency in the skills of listening, viewing, speaking, reading, and writing German. Cultural awareness and understanding play a fundamental role within lessons.• In the ELC, German language input is provided by the assistants who speak German to the children throughout the day.• In PYP 1 to 5, students are offered a language rich German programme, which emphasises the importance of acquiring the listening and spoken German skills needed to thrive in a German-speaking country.• ABIS provides five hours per week of German second language instruction to all students from PYP 1 to PYP 5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An after-school club in Spanish speaking and listening is offered.

5.2 PYP language and literature

English	German	Spanish
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At ABIS, we teach English through our programme of inquiry. These lessons build on the four strands of language learning (listening and speaking, reading, writing and viewing and presenting) needed to	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In lower PYP, all children in a class are taught together, regardless of German language ability, with differentiation carried out using teaching assistants.• In upper PYP, students are	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A government sponsored language class for native and proficient Spanish speaking children is offered once per week.• The children learn the 4 strands of language (reading,

<p>master to become proficient in a language.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Grammar is taught in context, and students are exposed to a wide range of literature from different genres, periods, and cultures. World literature is an important component in the programme. By exploring literature from other cultures, we are encouraging our students to develop open mindedness as they learn to appreciate literary works not only from authors from their own corners of the world, but also from other parts of the world. ● Students are encouraged to express both analytical and personal responses and engage in a number of reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing activities to encourage the development of linguistic and literacy skills. Students receive five 50-minute periods of Language and Literature instruction per week. 	<p>streamed according to ability, with more proficient students given more challenging tasks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is a focus for all students on the 4 strands of language learning and the German language is taught in a real-life, engaging context. In German lessons, children are exposed to a wide variety of German language texts, both from Austria and from other German speaking countries, and are encouraged to celebrate and enjoy learning the German language. These texts form the basis for students producing their own texts. ● German lessons are often integrated into the programme of inquiry and there is regular communication between grade level teams to ensure that German lessons are used as an opportunity to explore units. Students receive five 50-minute periods of German instruction per week. 	<p>writing, speaking and listening) as well as aspects of Spanish and Hispanophone culture.</p>
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5.3 PYP language in the Early Learning Centre (ELC)

Our early years team offers a stimulating and rich language environment for our youngest students, focused on improving children's ability to communicate effectively in the English language. The majority of the staff communicate almost exclusively in English with the students, whilst some support staff communicate almost exclusively in German, in order to maintain a link with the host country language. In the final year (ages 5-6) of ELC, students are taken out of the main group setting to attend more targeted sessions with a teacher who prepares them for the kinds of English language tasks they will meet in PYP 1.

5.4. ESOL in the PYP

As an international school committed to the principles of the IB, we are always happy to accept children of all language backgrounds into our school community. For those students who are very new to the English language, we offer an extra programme of English support with a specialist ESOL teacher. This intervention is done outside of the classroom, either individually or in small groups, with a view to providing the child with the language necessary to engage with the programme. These lessons will usually take place when the rest of the class is engaged in language learning. This support is mandatory in some cases, and must be paid for separately by the parents of the child. When the ESOL teacher and class teachers decide that the intervention is no longer necessary, the student will be integrated into the class for language learning. Further information about fees can be found in our **admissions** policy.

5.5 Additional languages

If we have enough students in school who speak the same mother tongue, we may have the possibility to offer further language programmes in that language, supported by the local government. In the event of us having 10 or more students from the same language background in, we will contact the local government to explore the possibility of doing this. For the time being, this is only offered in Spanish.

5.6 Mother Tongue Support

We recognise the importance of mother tongue language acquisition, and provide support for students in the following ways:

- Library resources are available in various languages
- Supporting parents in organizing mother tongue tutoring outside normal school hours, and providing facilities for this purpose
- Displaying a variety of languages throughout the school building

6. The Middle Years Programme (MYP)

The MYP offers language Programs In MYP English, German and Spanish. All students will have the opportunity to take language courses based on the IB language phase levels informed by the MYP Language Acquisition (LA) and MYP Language and Literature (L&L) subject guides:

In the MYP, it is a requirement that all students study at least two languages, one from the language and literature course and one from the language acquisition course.

We currently offer two parallel streams: language and literature and language acquisition. All acquisition students will be taught together, however will receive differentiated work.

6.1 MYP language and literature at ABIS

At ABIS, we offer English and German as Language and Literature (LL). These courses build on the four strands of language learning (listening and speaking, reading, writing and viewing and presenting) that students have learned in the PYP. The subject is offered as an integrated course which fosters creative and critical thinking. Each unit consists of a statement of inquiry, global context and key and related concepts.

Grammar is taught in context, and students are exposed to a wide range of literature from different genres, periods, and cultures. World literature is an important component in each year of the programme.

By exploring literature from other cultures, we are encouraging our students to develop open mindedness as they learn to appreciate literary works not only from authors from their own corners of the world, but also from other parts of the world. Students are encouraged to express both analytical and personal responses and engage in a number of reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing activities to encourage the development of linguistic and literacy skills.

Students receive four 50-minute periods of Language and Literature instruction per week. They are assessed using the IB MYP prescribed assessment criteria for the subject.

6.2 MYP language acquisition at ABIS

At ABIS we are very much aware of the fact that our students are living in an increasingly interconnected world in which knowing how to communicate in multiple languages can lead to the opening of many doors. We therefore make it a priority to ensure that every student develops proficiency in at least two languages.

Research has shown that learning other languages brings numerous benefits such as building multitasking skills, improving decision-making skills and boosting brain

development. According to Professor Dorothy Leonard, people who speak two or more languages can “see the world from two or more perspectives.” They have “the cognitive diversity needed to formulate innovative solutions to complex problems.” (Dan Frost 2010).

Learning another language can also help to bridge cultural connections and may give someone an economic edge. By giving our students the opportunity to learn other languages, we are giving them the chance to develop these important attributes. Our language acquisition programme contributes to the multicultural identity of our international community.

In the MYP, students have the opportunity to study Spanish and German as second languages. For both languages students are taught within six phases depending on their competencies. They receive three 50-minute periods of Spanish and German per week and they are assessed according to the Language Acquisition Assessment Criteria prescribed by the IB. Depending on how students have performed in both languages during the year, they may be recommended to move to a higher phase or a lower one.

In German Language Acquisition, students who have reached phase 4 may be considered for transfer to German Language and Literature. The decisions to move students from one group to the other will be done in consultation with all the parties concerned.

The following table illustrates which courses are offered by year group:

Class/Course	LA 1-2 Emergent	LA 3-4 Capable	LA 5-6 Proficient	Language & Literature
MYP 1	English, German, Spanish	English, German, Spanish	English, German, Spanish	English, German
MYP 2	English, German, Spanish	English, German, Spanish	English, German, Spanish	English, German
MYP 3	English, German, Spanish	English, German, Spanish	English, German, Spanish	English, German
MYP 4	English, German, Spanish	English, German, Spanish	English, German, Spanish	English, German
MYP5	German, Spanish	German, Spanish	German, Spanish	English, German

6.3. Language and Learning Support

Wherever possible, students are placed in either the LA or LL classes according to their proficiency in the relevant language. However, on exceptional occasions, a student with diagnosed learning challenges may be placed in the language acquisition class despite an oral proficiency which would suggest that they should be in the LL class. This is done in order to allow the students to achieve some sense of success and not to overwhelm them with tasks which are beyond their ability to master.

6.4 Language Support in the MYP

6.5 English as a Second Language (ESOL) Programme

Our ESOL programme is designed to provide specialised support to English language learners, in addition to the teaching offered in language acquisition classes. This support is provided at an additional cost to parents of students who require it.

These are students who have little or no proficiency in English and because of this, their ability to fully participate in both the academic and social aspects of school life are severely hampered. These students have a wealth of knowledge in their mother tongue but because they often lack the vocabulary and concept of the new language they will have problems comprehending the content.

In order to identify and diagnose this need early, all new students who are admitted into our Middle Years Programme (from MYP 1 to MYP 4) are required to take an English language proficiency test in the four core skills: speaking, writing, reading and listening. The test also helps to determine the amount and type of support that students will need. We cannot accept students into MYP 5 who do not have a level of English necessary to sit the eAssessments during the school year.

Once students have been assessed they are placed in their appropriate level. Those who require ESOL support receive a combination of intensive small group support with a specialist ESOL teacher in pull-out classes and some in-class support as needed. All ESOL support is delivered during regular class time and integrated into the curriculum. (covered on page 7 – Admissions policy). ESOL teachers also focus on building student confidence and developing their communicative competence.

The ESOL teacher regularly monitors students' progress and this is communicated to other teachers and parents. An ESOL student will exit the programme when both the ESOL and other subject teachers are satisfied that the student has attained sufficient mastery of the language that would enable him/her to follow mainstream classes. The parents of ESOL students will also be notified when their child exits the ESOL Programme. The student's progress in the mainstream classroom is consistently monitored and further ESL support is available as required.

6.6 Mother Tongue Support

The term mother tongue usually refers to one's native language (Merriam-Webster 2015). It is essential for students to maintain their mother tongue to ensure continuous cognitive development and to support their learning across the curriculum.

In addition to learning English, ABIS is committed to helping students develop appropriate language skills to become proficient communicators in their mother tongue. It is important for them to be able to read with fluency and express themselves effectively, both orally and in writing.

Maintaining and developing their mother tongue also facilitates students' transition back into the school and society of their home country, should they return there. At ABIS all students are required to study German, the language of the host country. We therefore encourage our students to use mother tongue resources, where appropriate, to deepen their understanding of concepts being taught.

7. Language across the school: Additional Aspects

7.1 Language Profile

The language of instruction and communication at ABIS is English, however ABIS has a culturally and linguistically diverse school community, with a student population representing many nations and many languages. Currently (May 2023) about 30% of our students speak English at home, about 24% speak German and the remaining 46% has a mother tongue other than English. Our staff body is also made up of teachers from various countries, who speak a variety of languages. We embrace the variety of languages and cultures that our school is home to.

Students admitted to the school are taught the skills needed to become proficient readers, writers and communicators in the English language both for social interaction and academic success. English is also the school's working language, and is used for governance, administration and management, collaborative planning, instruction, assessment, professional development and enrichment.

German is also used widely within the school for administrative purposes. It is a requirement that all students study German (the language of the host country). Starting in MYP 1, students will be given the opportunity to study Spanish as a third language. Throughout the ABIS academic program, ABIS will strive to support all students to study their mother-tongue language as part of or in addition to the academic program.

Although English and German are the most common languages used in the school and generally outside the classroom, we also encourage the use of other languages in appropriate circumstances. It is therefore not uncommon to hear teachers and students reverting to mother-tongue in subjects, or chatting informally together in a

language other than English. However we encourage students to use the language of instruction in lessons where possible.

7.2 Library and Media Center

At ABIS we believe that the school library has an important role to play in the promotion of language learning. It is the aim of the school librarian to provide diverse resources and opportunities to foster understanding and appreciation of life-long language learning. The school librarian is continually upgrading our library in order to ensure that it responds to the linguistic needs of our multilingual student community.

Library materials are carefully chosen to support the curriculum. The school's resources offer access to different cultures, perspectives and languages. There is an emphasis on developing the mother tongue collection to reflect the linguistic diversity of our student population. The librarian works in close collaboration with teachers to support students' language and literacy development in English, language acquisition courses as well as their mother tongue. The librarian also works with the teachers to implement the school ATL skills scope and sequence and to plan and deliver academic integrity workshops for all students. Classes can access the library at all times with teacher permission. Children are encouraged to borrow books and spend time enjoying the resources.

7.3 Professional Development

ABIS provides ongoing professional development for all teaching staff. Ongoing professional development addresses the concept of international-mindedness and the role languages have in the curriculum. Additionally, this training provides rich opportunities for staff to share best practices and to develop strategies to ensure that the curriculum is accessible to all students.

7.4 Parental Involvement

Parents are recognized as an integral part of our learning community and, as such, are involved in listening to readers and providing expert knowledge as guest speakers. Our Parent Association has also provided help in the provision of mother tongue language support and advice. ABIS provides regular parental workshops about IB related language.

7.5 Language Learning Within Other Areas of the Curriculum

At ABIS language development is seen as a shared responsibility, and therefore all teachers are expected to play an active role in promoting language learning in their respective subject areas. Subject teachers are expected to teach the language structures and conventions needed in their subject. Research evidence has shown that adapting teaching approaches to accommodate children without the same

level of language ability as native children has a beneficial effect (European Commission 2015).

It is therefore required that teachers differentiate their instructions in order to meet the learning needs of students experiencing difficulties with the language of instruction. Within the classrooms, we encourage all teachers to employ strategies such as technology based lessons, menus, tiered instruction, differentiated texts or simplifying the language used in tests and other tasks for struggling students.

7.6 Technology

ABIS embraces technology as an integral part of language teaching, which enhances the learning experience. Technology enables students to investigate, create, communicate, collaborate, organize, and be responsible for their own learning. The interactive nature of new technologies can transcend linguistic, cultural and geographic boundaries. The audio and visual components of these tools can help further reinforce an understanding of languages and texts. To this end, ipads in the PYP and laptops in the MYP are used along with other tools as aids to language learning and to enable students to more easily access elements of teaching and learning. We feel that, properly used, this technology motivates and empowers language learners.

Whenever possible we will employ new technologies to help our students make connections with their counterparts from other countries. In addition, for some mother tongues, we will encourage students to explore self-study programmes available for free on the internet.

7.7 Student-Exchange Programmes

At ABIS we seek to create an environment where all students can explore and learn other languages in a meaningful and authentic context. Our student-exchange programmes will be designed to supplement the language learning that is happening in the classroom. Through this programme teachers and students will get to travel to countries where the targeted language is spoken, giving them first-hand experiences which can provide critical incentives to learn. This kind of initiative also creates opportunities for students to make friends in other countries which in turn can help to improve their language skills.

7.8 Parental Involvement in Language Learning

Parents have the power to help their children develop proficiency in their mother tongue which in turn will help to preserve the linguistic heritage of their community. We also believe that the learning process continues at home and that students benefit by writing and reading in their mother tongue. ABIS strongly encourages families to use the mother tongue extensively in their homes, the community, and other outside school experiences. Parents can help their children develop mother tongue competences by providing opportunities for conversations that entail rich language use in the mother tongue. This will not only support maintaining the

mother tongue, but enhance English language learning in addition to other languages they may choose to learn later.

Learning their mother tongue also has the added benefit of enhancing students' confidence, their cultural awareness and pride in their culture. The majority of students who attend our school are not native English speakers, or come from backgrounds of mixed cultures and languages. These children are faced with the challenges of learning multiple home languages in addition to other languages that they have to learn at school. At ABIS we encourage such families to implement a Family Language Plan (See Appendix I). We also encourage parents to support their child by taking an active interest in their daily homework assignments.

8. Further Links

Our other school policies, along with language and other curricula, can be found by following **this link**.

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10. The Policy

The Anton Bruckner International School Academic Honesty Policy was drafted jointly by the full teaching faculty. The Anton Bruckner International School Academic Honesty Policy was reviewed by the full teaching faculty and administration in April 2023.

Reviewed: May 2023
To be reviewed by: May 2025

Appendix 1: An Example of a Family Language Plan

Family Language Plan Strategies

	Parent 1 (Mom)	Parent 2 (Dad)	The School (ABIS)	The Plan	Example
Strategy 1	Language A	Language A	Language B	Both of the parents speak their native language to the child, who is fully exposed to Language B (English in the case of ABIS), when outside of the home, particularly at school. This becomes the child's second language	Mom and dad are both native Thai speakers. Thai is always spoken at home, and English language education is received from the school
Strategy 2	Language A	Language B	Language A or B	The parents each speak their native language to the child, but one of the native languages is supported in school.	Mom is Chinese and dad is American. Mom speaks only Mandarin to the child. Dad only speaks English to the child. The child gets further English through the school
Strategy 3	Language A Language B	Language A	Language C	One of the parents always addresses the child in his/her second language. The other parent uses the native language. (This is most successful if the parent has 2 native languages. If the parent speaking his/her second language does not have it as a native language, he/she must have intensively studied and mastered the language).	Mom is German, but has native-like fluency in French (Meaning that intensive study occurred for 5 - 10 years, or perhaps French is an additional native language). Mom speaks her second language, French, to the child. Dad is also German, but only speaks German to the child. The child receives English instruction from school.
Strategy 4	Language A	Language B	Language C	Each of the parents always speaks their native language to the child. The child gets a third language through the school.	Mom's native language is Spanish. Dad's native language is Hebrew. Mom always speaks Spanish to the child, and dad always speaks Hebrew to the child. The child obtains a third language, English, from the school

