

# Language Policy



*This Language Acquisition 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 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 and 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 multiliteracy skills and attitudes, enabling them to communicate successfully in various global contexts and build intercultural 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.

## 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 5, 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. 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:

	<b>MYP 1</b>	<b>MYP 2</b>	<b>MYP 3</b>	<b>MYP 4</b>	<b>MYP 5</b>
<b>English Language &amp; Literature</b>	All	All	All	All	All
<b>Greek Language &amp; Literature</b>	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
<b>Language Acquisition (Greek)</b>	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
<b>Language Acquisition (French)</b>	All non-home language Greek learners	All	All	Elective	Elective
<b>Language Acquisition (Spanish)</b>	All	All non-home language Greek learners	All non-home language Greek learners	Elective	Elective

The Falcon School acknowledges the importance of the home language for developing the student's cognitive development, self-identity and acquiring other languages as well, and students are encouraged to maintain their link with the language of their home country, even if it is not possible to follow the language in

school. This is achieved through connections with 3<sup>rd</sup> parties, for example the Russian Embassy.

\*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. 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. Our goal is for students to:

- Learn a language, as students use it to communicate
- Learn about language, as students develop an understanding of how language works.
- Learn through language, as students use it as a tool to understand, think, and reflect.

#### **5. Support for students who are not proficient in English**

Individual and/or group support for students, who are identified as being below the level of proficiency for making good progress in their learning, is provided by specialist teachers as an additional extra to the mainstream teaching of English Language and Literature. The number and frequency of support sessions is assessed on a basis of need.

## 6. Assessment

The MYP assessment criteria across subject groups are summarized in the table below. The criteria for **Language and Literature** and **Language Acquisition** are highlighted in orange, although *all* subject groups rely in some way on effective language skills for assessment. Explicitly language-based assessment criteria in other subjects are highlighted in green:

	A	B	C	D
<b>Language and Literature</b>	Analyzing	Organizing	Producing text	Using language
<b>Language Acquisition</b>	Listening (Comprehending spoken and visual text )	Reading (Comprehending written and visual text)	Speaking (Communicating verbally)	Writing (Communicating using written language)
<b>Individuals and Societies</b>	Knowing and understanding	Investigating	Communicating	Thinking critically
<b>Sciences</b>	Knowing and understanding	Inquiring and designing	Processing and evaluating	Reflecting on the impacts of science
<b>Mathematics</b>	Knowing and understanding	Investigating patterns	Communicating	Applying mathematics in real-world contexts
<b>Arts</b>	Knowing and understanding	Developing skills	Thinking creatively	Responding
<b>Physical and health education</b>	Knowing and understanding	Planning for performance	Applying and performing	Reflecting and improving performance
<b>Design</b>	Inquiring and analyzing	Developing ideas	Creating the solution	Evaluating

### 6.1 MYP Language Assessment Tasks

A variety of assessment strategies may be used to develop suitable and appropriate performances of understanding. Tasks, targeting MYP objectives, are broadly represented by the following list.

- Compositions—musical, physical, artistic
- Creation of solutions or products in response to problems
- Essays
- Examinations



- Questionnaires
- Investigations
- Research
- Performances
- Presentations—verbal (oral or written), graphic (through various media)

The MYP subject-group guides (available from the IBO) provide more information on assessment tasks and their applicability to certain criteria. Assessment of language elements will vary from subject to subject.

Generally, MYP internal assessment includes tasks, strategies and tools that are designed, developed and applied by teachers working with students in our school. These assessments encourage teachers to monitor students' developing understanding and abilities throughout the programme.

Each unit of each subject includes formative and summative assessments that are planned at the beginning of the unit. All essential elements are assessed: knowledge, concepts, skills, service and action. Learners are informed of the purpose and means of assessment.

## **6.2 Formative Assessment**

Through effective formative assessment, teachers gather, analyze, interpret and use a variety of evidence to improve student learning and to help students to achieve their potential. Student peer and self-assessment can be important elements of formative assessment plans.

Tools and Strategies for Formative Assessment include: Rubrics, Checklists, Exemplars; Anecdotal Observations, Performance, Process-focused assessment, Selected response (quizzes & tests), Open-ended tasks

## **6.3 Summative Assessments**

These generally occur at the end of the teaching and learning process. Summative assessment allows students to demonstrate their understandings in actions and demonstrate a range of knowledge, conceptual understanding and skills. It also allows them to base their learning on real life experiences that can lead to further inquiries. It provides information for parents and teachers on the progress of the student and what has been learned. Internal (school-based) summative assessment is part of every MYP unit. Summative assessments are designed to provide evidence for evaluating student achievement using required MYP subject- specific assessment criteria (see below).

## 7. MYP Levels of Achievement

The Overall Level of Achievement (OLA) is the end of the year grade out of 7 based on overall performance across all the assessment criteria for a subject. Throughout the year, teachers will collect evidence of student achievement from many different types of assessment including formative and summative assessments. Sometimes, all criteria in the subject are applied to an assessment, but more often fewer criteria are assessed per task. Only assessments that are criterion-related are entered as grades to be applied towards the OLA. By the end of the year, students will have completed enough assessment tasks for each criterion in every subject to be assessed. **Some of the assessment tasks in any given subject will have depended on effective use of language.**

The following table outlines the General Grade Descriptors in the MYP. **Language elements figure importantly in these descriptors.**

OLA	MYP General Grade Descriptors
7	Produces high quality, frequently innovative work. Communicates comprehensive understanding of concepts and contexts. Consistently demonstrates sophisticated critical and creative thinking. Frequently transfers knowledge and skills with independence and expertise in a variety of complex classroom and real-world situations.
6	Produces high quality, occasionally innovative work. Communicates extensive understanding of concepts and contexts. Demonstrates critical and creative thinking, frequently with sophistication. Uses knowledge and skills in familiar and unfamiliar classroom and real-world situations, often with independence.
5	Produces generally high-quality work. Communicates secure understanding of concepts and contexts. Demonstrates critical and creative thinking, sometimes with sophistication. Uses knowledge and skills in familiar classroom and real-world situations and, with support, some unfamiliar real world situation.
4	Produces generally good quality work. Communicates basic understanding of most concepts and contest with few misunderstandings and minor gaps. Often demonstrates basic critical and creative thinking. Uses knowledge and skills with some flexibility in familiar classroom situations, but requires support in unfamiliar situations.
3	Produces work of an acceptable quality. Communicates basic understanding of many concepts and contexts, with occasionally significant misunderstanding or gaps. Begins to demonstrate some basic critical and creative thinking. Is often inflexible in the use of knowledge and skills, requiring support even in familiar classroom situations.
2	Produces work of limited quality. Expresses misunderstandings or significant gaps in understanding for many concepts and contexts.

	Infrequently demonstrates critical or creative thinking. Generally inflexible in the use of knowledge and skills, infrequently applies knowledge and skills.
<b>1</b>	Produces work of very limited quality. Conveys many significant misunderstandings or lacks understanding of most concepts and contexts. Very rarely demonstrates critical or creative thinking. Very inflexible, rarely using knowledge or skills.

## 10. Bibliography

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