

# SKAGERAK

## INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

# Language Policy

Guidelines for members of the Primary, Middle and High school community



IB CONTINUUM  
CONTINUUM DE L'IB  
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This document has been prepared the schools IB Coordinators and a team of teachers across all schools: 2018-2019  
Year of intended review: 2020-2021 and biannually thereafter.

\*new staff will be given this policy to review as part of the induction process.

## A Policy

### Policy statement

At Skagerak International School, language is of foremost concern to all members of the school community, being essential to communication, learning, promoting our values, pursuing our vision and fulfilling our mission. Language considerations will be taken into account with every aspect of the school's operations.

### Philosophy

ref. Judith Fabian, 2011: 'Principled teaching and learning' in *The Changing Face of International Education* ed. Walker.

We believe that language acquisition and development is a continuous process and that each student has a unique language profile that reflects their individual, family and cultural identity, as well as their experiences of living in and visiting various places. Learning, thinking and constructing meaning take place through language; therefore, learning about language and learning through language are central to the curriculum. The pedagogical framework of the school – the elements of which are extending students' knowledge and experiences, conceptual development, putting learning into context, inquiry and critical thinking, meaningful action and communication amongst a community of learners - is operationalized through language. As such, it is the most significant means by which we can foster students' ability to become independent, lifelong learners.

### IB Learner Profile

Ref. The IB Learner Profile booklet (2006: 5).

It can be considered that language is essential in the process of developing internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world. Without language, a person would not be able to articulate their values, develop the necessary knowledge and understanding, establish relationships, communicate their intentions or explain and reflect upon their actions. As students develop their ability to communicate through language, they come to understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. Through language, they learn to work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.

### Purposes, Beliefs and Principles

#### Purpose

The purpose of the school's language policy is to provide guidance for developing the curriculum and for facilitating learning and development in students. The school's policy is consistent with its vision, mission and identity as an international school in Norway, as well as with the values and principles of the IB PYP, MYP and DP.

#### Beliefs

The following beliefs about language exist at Skagerak International School.

- All teachers are teachers of language
- Language competence has a direct relation to a student's ability to communicate
- Language competence has a direct relation to a student's identity, sense of security and belonging, confidence and their social and emotional well-being
- All languages are valued
- Language has functional and aesthetic aspects which must both be addressed in the curriculum
- The school should offer opportunities for students to develop their home language or mother tongue, and that they have at least one language in which they are capable of thinking at higher conceptual level
- Students must be assisted to develop competence across the four language modes of speaking, listening, reading and writing

- Students should be given as much support as possible so that they can participate fully in the learning experiences and the discourse of the school
- The school has a crucial role in helping students appreciate diverse perspectives and to develop international-mindedness and intercultural awareness through the use of language
- The continuous acquisition of language is a process which develops and progresses along a continuum.

Particular importance is placed upon

- the need for students to gather information and develop concepts and comprehend in a language in which they are able and confident
- flexibility within and between languages; in particular, bi- or multilingualism
- the various forms that language takes, including the symbol systems by which it is recorded.

## **Principles**

### Differentiation

- Each student should have his or her language profile taken into account when the teacher is planning.
- PYP and MYP, DP unit plans require teachers to include teaching strategies and it is expected that language differentiation will be recorded there.
- The PYP unit planners have an addendum for ELA/Unit planning to help teachers and ELA staff to differentiate for unit work.
- The school aims to provide suitable resources to assist with the differentiation or support of language learning; for example, providing alternative versions of texts such as audio books, films or translations where applicable.
- In test or examination situations, including standardized testing, teachers liaise with the learning support coordinator to ensure support will be provided to help students who are being assessed in a language where they are still at an emergent level – provided that this does not compromise the purpose of the assessment.

### Teaching in the target language

Teachers are expected to teach in the target language (the language that the student is learning at the time). Students should also be encouraged and supported in such a way that they willingly take the risk to communicate in the target language as well. This is particularly the case with language B (French and Spanish) where students may prefer to default to either English or Norwegian. However, it is also important to be mindful of those who are not yet confident about speaking English or Norwegian within the language A or mainstream English class context. Teachers must also be sensitive to the tools students need for understanding, including dictionaries, additional resources in the child's home language, or translation if necessary to ensure that students understand concepts and tasks.

## Responsibilities

Certain language-related responsibilities are assigned to particular members of staff:	
The taught language curriculum	PYP Coordinator, MYP Coordinator; DP Coordinator, class teachers
Placement in language classes	MS: MYP Coordinator HS: DP Coordinator in collaboration with HS English teachers
Identification for ELA support	PS: Class teacher, English language support teacher MS: Language A teaching staff / MYP Coordinator HS: Language A teaching staff / DP Coordinator
Identification for NSL support	PS: Norwegian teacher MS: Language A teaching staff / MYP Coordinator HS: Language A & B teaching staff / DP Coordinator
Transition between levels of Lang B	Language B teachers (MS&HS)
Movement into and between Lang B subjects	MYP Coordinator / Lang B teaching staff DP Coordinator
Identification and testing of language needs for new admissions	Student Support teacher / PPT Coordinator PS Principal, MS Principal, HS principal
Development of mother tongue provisions	PYP Coordinator, MYP Coordinator, DP Coordinator
Review of schoolwide language policy	Stakeholder feedback, PYP Coordinator, MYP Coordinator, DP Coordinator, Principals

## Common Frame of Reference

### Main languages offered in the curriculum

English is the main language of instruction of the school. Students are actively encouraged to speak English in classes for which English is the medium of instruction, and to gradually reduce the reliance they have on other languages for communicating, expressing ideas, and processing information when learning in English. Through a planned immersion environment, they are subject to sheltered and differentiated instruction at an age appropriate academic standard. Students with limited English are supported and their instruction is scaffolded as they work towards becoming independent in an English language environment. Many aspects of the environment, including classroom walls and teaching resources, are intended to provide a rich, varied, and stimulating English language environment.

Norwegian is the secondary language of the school used for instruction in language and literature and, in the primary school, for instruction in the PYP units. Norwegian is taught to all students, widely used in social situations, and used to aid comprehension of subject matter where needed. Teachers with specialized knowledge of Norwegian play a vital role in the language and conceptual development of all students. The importance of Norwegian as the host country language and as the mother tongue of a large number of the students is a significant factor in the overall character of the school. Extra support in the form of differentiation, scaffolding, and resources, is provided for those students for whom Norwegian is a new or additional language.

French and Spanish are currently taught through the MYP as Language Acquisition (Language B) subjects. The aim is to teach these subjects as much in the target language as the student's level of independence will allow. The schools aims to give students in the upper PYP years structured exposure to these languages and in the first few weeks of MY1 students rotate through class environments so they can make more informed choices about the language they feel will best suit their interests/needs.

Students who are native speakers to a language are strongly discouraged from taking classes in the same language. The purpose for these classes is an acquisition; not advanced consolidation. Students who have

already consolidated a language (phase 4) would not have the same possibilities for group interaction, more independent work and find the speed of learning slow as it matches the beginners in the class. See appendix A for an overview of the phases for Language Acquisition.

Students who are of high school age and would like to take Language and Literature in their mother tongue, independent study is a possibility. Admission to a language class which matches their mother tongue is decided on a discretionary basis by both the parents and the school.

There is also an English language support class offered at the same time and those students that are finding it difficult to access the curriculum in English can be given extra support in that language, as an alternative. At the beginning of MY2, students taking additional English language are encouraged to mainstream into the main language acquisition classes but they may still delay beginning French, Spanish or German if their competence in English is not yet strong. The school tries to keep the classes close in terms of phases for language learning where possible.

Students are able to continue in English, Norwegian, French and Spanish, as A or B, when there is sufficient need in the IB Diploma Programme in the high school.

#### English language support

The school offers only a limited amount of in-class or pull-out ELA support.

In the PYP, some assistance hours are allocated to either in-class or withdrawal support. Extra short-term support is given to new students who enter the school with very low levels of English, or none at all.

In the MYP, an English language support class option is offered according to demand. It runs as an alternative to Language B. In addition, the classroom assistants allocated to students with special educational needs, through PPT funding, are also available to support students with their English or Norwegian language if required. Otherwise, the intent is to help all students learn with support and a differentiated approach within the Language A English classroom.

We acknowledge that most students in the school need some degree of English support and therefore teachers should adjust their methods of presenting information and organize tasks and resources in mainstream classes accordingly. All teachers in mainstream classes where English is the medium of instruction are seen as ELA teachers, and are expected to provide scaffolded and differentiated instruction in order to enable content and concepts to be understood.

#### Norwegian language support

As the host country language, Norwegian language plays a prominent part in the school discourse and culture. Most students in the school speak Norwegian to a certain extent, but some arrive in the country needing to learn Norwegian from the beginning. They are given differentiated work and in-class support wherever possible (see above)

#### Other languages

First or home language (mother tongue)

The school obtains information about a student's language profile when they join the school and keeps track of the range of languages that are represented amongst the student population. The Norwegian Private School Law (*Privatskoleloven*) provides for funding, upon application, to enable students to attend after-school classes in their mother tongue language and the school is responsible for applying for that funding from the local municipality. However, in recent years, the school has been refused funding for both Norwegian as a Second Language (NSL) teaching and mother tongue language instruction, even though this funding is available to eligible students in public schools. This refusal has come from the county authorities, who have adopted the position that Skagerak, as a private school with a curriculum in English, is not entitled to supplementary

funding. This interpretation of the Private School Law differs from county to county. The school continues to pursue this issue in an effort to gain access to funding for addition language teaching.

See also MYP, below.

### Language profiles

The school collects information about the language profile of each student including mother tongue language, the language(s) spoken at home, the languages studied at school and any other that have previously been studied or learned. This information is kept in the student information database which is maintained by office administration.

### Library

The library has a vital role in the promotion of literacy and therefore the development of students' language. The library holdings shall include texts in all of those languages that are offered in the curriculum and library development will take all four languages into consideration. The school is also interested in developing a more extensive range of library offerings for mother tongue languages in the school, and in housing these in the library.

## **B Primary school guidelines and procedures**

The school is committed to primary students' developing target languages, second language, and mother tongue. The primary school is currently able to make provision for Arabic, French and Spanish speakers in an afterschool program. The school welcomes competent home language instructors for after school programs.

### **Target Languages**

Target languages of instruction are English and Norwegian. Target languages use the IB scope and sequences to develop sequential language learning along agreed objectives and conceptual frameworks. Target language instruction is planned and incorporated within the UOI when possible, additional language skills that fall outside the UOI is planned on a stand-alone planner. Details of learning outcomes are available in the school scope and sequence documents and the unit documentation and will be mapped in stand-alone language planners.

### **Second Languages**

Differentiation in the target languages is provided for all students. Designated ELA students have an IEP (Individualised Educational Plan) and their language learning is mapped on an ELA continuum. The English language teacher and ELA staff fill out a Unit/EAL plan based on the EAL child's IEP and the EAL continuum, in concert with the language outcomes from the scope and sequence decided for the unit. The Norwegian teacher plans for differentiation for second or additional language learners within the classroom, taking into consideration varied resources, groupings, tasks, and home assignments.

### **Mother tongue**

Mother tongue refers to the student's first language. Where the student's mother tongue is not English or Norwegian, the school is committed to providing some opportunities to help the child continue to develop his or her mother tongue. This includes developing awareness, appreciation and curiosity for mother tongue languages and cultures within the school and community, encouraging mother tongue clubs for larger mother tongue groups, informing parents about the importance of maintaining mother tongue, updating the school community about *mother tongue opportunities, and celebrating mother tongue languages*.

## **C Middle school guidelines and procedures**

MYP language acquisition is a compulsory component of the MYP in every year of the programme.

The school counsels students about their choices for language acquisition courses before the start of the MYP by

- giving students a placement test to determine in which phase they will continue with language acquisition from a previous educational programme
- organizing an Introduction to the MYP orientation as part of the enrolment process that includes information about language acquisition course
- setting up a languages carousel in the final year of PYP, during which students can experience a brief introduction to each language acquisition course offered in the MYP/in MY1
- providing an information meeting to final year PYP parents to inform them about the scope and purpose of the language acquisition course
- all introductory language courses must conclude before students choose their language acquisition course for the remainder of the MYP

After the introductory courses are completed students must choose one of the languages from the carousel and continue with that language throughout the programme or until they demonstrate a satisfactory proficiency in phase 4 and begin the study of another language.

When possible, the school tries to ensure consistency in the classes by grouping students in no more than two consecutive phases in one class together, however this is not always possible. The Language Acquisition teachers and the MYP Coordinator decide on the phases offered in the school based on the needs of the students and the number of students in each phase.

When there is a specialized need for mother tongue learning, the school can assist a student to make extracurricular independent study provisions for French speakers. Native speakers could work towards B2, C1/C2 levels in the Common European Framework depending their level of proficiency. The CEF is supported by the French institutes in each European country including Norway, which in turn run the exams usually twice a year. There are ample resources for the preparation of students wishing to take the CEF which the school could help establish with the student. Currently, any after school classes that could be offered will be paid privately by the parents.

Students are periodically surveyed about their interest in learning additional languages in after school classes. French, Spanish, Russian and Lithuanian have been offered in the past in this context, with parents occasionally being involved on a voluntary basis if possible.

At this stage, the school is not able to provide for formal mother tongue learning in other languages; while the school population reflects many languages, there are only a few speakers of each. The school's main role is to liaise with parents in order to stress the importance of continued mother tongue language learning at home.

## **D High school guidelines and procedures**

The school is non-selective with the exception of one requirement: all students entering the school must have a level of competence in the school's language of instruction (English) such that they are able to study that language at one of the following levels in the IB Diploma Programme: A or B. Proficiency tests are often administered when students begin at the high school in order to assess their competence in English and /or Norwegian. Results from the test are used to support students accordingly.

The school can provide ELA support to students in addition to regular timetabled English classes. However, the student's level of competence in English on entering the school in the Year 11 must be such that there is a realistic chance that, with the additional support the school can provide, the student will be able to cope with the demands of the English B course by the time they start the DP.



The school recognizes the centrality of language competence in the academic development of students and since language is central to learning; all teachers are, in practice, language teachers with responsibilities in facilitating communication.

The program of study in MY5/Year 11 mirrors that of the first year of the Norwegian high school (Vg1) *studiespesialisering* programme of pre-university study. In addition, the program is supplemented with additional lessons during the year to prepare students for the IBDP.

All students in Year 11 study English either as their mother-tongue language or as an additional language. Students are taught in mixed ability classes, which are also a mix of native/near native speakers and second-language speakers.

It is a requirement that all students study Norwegian either as a Language A or Language B. The vast majority of students attending SIS are native Norwegians and as such follow a language and literature course with the MYP framework in Year 11 that aligns directly to the Vg1 content required by the state. For those students where Norwegian A is not appropriate, they are taught separately in a 'Norwegian ab initio' class. Studying Norwegian B is done in addition to studying one of the other Language B courses the school offers in Year 11: French or Spanish to meet the requirements for the national system.

It is a requirement in the Norwegian system of education that any student eligible for financial support for university must pass a recognized exam in Norwegian language to acquire the aforementioned support. Therefore, it is school policy that all students study Norwegian in Year 11 and in the DP at A or B level.

In Year 11, students who follow the Norwegian A course are required to study a second language B course in addition to English. The school offers French and Spanish as a second language in Year 11, only Spanish can be taken as ab initio.

It is a requirement of the DP that all candidates study either:

- one group 1 and one group 2 language course or
- two group 1 language courses where this is appropriate.

The following languages will be offered on a taught basis in the DP in the 2019/2020 academic year:

- English A Language and Literature HL/SL
- Norwegian A Language and Literature HL/SL English B HL/SL
- French B SL
- Norwegian B HL/SL
- Spanish B SL
- Spanish ab initio SL

A description of each of the above courses is available from the school and students and parents should discuss with the DP Coordinator and Language teacher which of the above courses is most appropriate, when making their subject choices for the DP.

Students whose mother-tongue language is neither English nor Norwegian can study their mother-tongue on a school supported self-taught basis where the mother-tongue language is offered by the IB. School supported self-taught language is a Group 1 course offered only at SL in Literature, meeting the same curricular requirements as other first language courses. Its function is to provide diploma candidates with a means of pursuing the study of their first language when there are too few student speakers of that language in a school to make taught classes in it viable.

Self-taught students are guided and supervised by a Language teacher who meets with them on a weekly basis. In addition to guidance on the course requirements, help is provided in the choice of books to be studied and tuition given in generic Language A skills.

Parents of self-taught students are encouraged to source tuition for their son/daughter from a teacher of the mother-tongue language where this is possible. The school can offer assistance in this area e.g. setting up email contact with a teacher in another DP school.

## E Bibliography

The following documents were used in the process of developing this policy:

IBO. (2014). *Middle Years Programme: Language acquisition guide*. Cardiff: International Baccalaureate Organisation.

IBO. (2013). *Diploma Programme: Language B Guide*. Cardiff: International Baccalaureate Organisation. IBO. (2011).

## F Appendices

### Appendix A: MYP Language Acquisition Global Proficiency table

Emergent communicator		Capable communicator		Proficient communicator	
Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5	Phase 6
Emergent communicators in phase 1 understand and respond to simple phrases, statements and questions. They identify basic messages, facts, opinions, feelings and ideas presented in oral, visual and written language, and demonstrate their comprehension in simple oral and written phrases. They convey basic information in a limited range of everyday situations, using oral and written language appropriate to a very limited range of interpersonal and cultural contexts. They begin to be aware that language use is connected to a purpose and an audience.	Emergent communicators in phase 2 understand and respond to simple spoken and written texts. They identify messages, facts, opinions, feelings and ideas presented in oral, visual and written language, and demonstrate their comprehension in short oral and written form. They interact to share information in a limited range of familiar situations, using basic language appropriate to a limited range of interpersonal and cultural contexts. They are aware that language varies according to purpose and audience.	Capable communicators in phase 3 understand and respond to a limited variety of spoken and written texts. They understand specific information, main ideas and some detail presented in oral, visual and written language, and demonstrate their comprehension in a limited range of oral and written forms. They engage in conversation and write structured text to express their ideas, opinions and experiences in a range of familiar and some unfamiliar situations, in a limited range of interpersonal and cultural contexts. They understand that they can speak and write in different ways for different purposes and audiences.	Capable communicators in phase 4 understand and respond to a variety of spoken and written texts. They interpret specific information, main ideas and some detail presented in complex oral, visual and written language, draw conclusions and recognize implied opinions and attitudes in texts read and viewed. They engage in conversation and write structured text to share informative and organized ideas on topics of personal interest and global significance, in a range of interpersonal and cultural contexts. They can communicate substantial information containing relevant and developed ideas and justified opinions on events, experiences and some concepts explored in class. They identify aspects of format and style, and speak and write with a clear sense of audience and purpose.	Proficient communicators in phase 5 analyse specific information, ideas, opinions and attitudes presented in oral, visual and written language. They draw conclusions, infer information and recognize implied opinions and attitudes. They respond and react to questions and ideas in a range of spoken, visual and written texts. They engage actively in conversations in social and some academic situations to contribute substantial information containing relevant and focused ideas supported by examples and illustrations. They organize information and ideas into a clear and effective structure to express their understanding and opinions on topics of personal interest and global significance. They interpret and are able to adapt aspects of format, register and style of language.	Proficient communicators in phase 6 evaluate the important information, details and ideas presented in spoken, written and visual language in social and academic contexts. They analyse the information, draw conclusions and make inferences about ideas, opinions and attitudes implied in a wide range of spoken, visual and written texts. They engage actively in conversations in social and academic situations to contribute substantial information and give detailed analysis and explanation. They organize information and ideas logically and effectively to communicate their understanding, opinions and perspectives to a wide range of audiences, and for a variety of social and academic purposes.

Table 3  
MYP language acquisition global proficiency table

1: 'MYP Language acquisition global proficiency table.' IB. p.25

## Appendix B: Language Acquisition pathways through the MYP-DP continuum

	MYP	DP
Phase 1		Ab initio
Phase 2		Ab initio (in rare cases) Language B SL
Phase 3		Language B SL
Phase 4		Language B SL/HL
Phase 5		Language B SL/HL
Phase 5	It is recommended the student has at least one semester in MYP language and literature before starting these DP courses.	Language A: literature SL Language A: language and literature SL Literature and performance SL
Phase 6	It is recommended the student has at least one semester in MYP language and literature before starting these DP courses.	Language A: literature SL/HL Language A: language and literature SL/HL Literature and performance SL

**Table 1**  
*Possible IB continuum pathways*

2: 'Possible IB continuum pathways.' IBO. p.8