



LANGUAGE POLICY

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1. Rationale

The British International School, Phuket (BISP) language policy provides a clear, coherent sense of purpose regarding language throughout the school by taking an inclusive approach (IBO, Access and inclusion policy, p1, 2021). It informs inclusive policies, procedures, and practices related to the education of our international student body. The language policy ensures equity in educational opportunities for all students while also celebrating the diversity of the student body to foster an environment of acceptance and respect for all (IBO, Learning diversity and inclusion, p10, 2020).

We believe that an understanding of multiple languages is a central element of learning in an international school, and we value the variety of languages spoken by our culturally-diverse student community. It is the interconnected and transdisciplinary skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing that promotes cognitive development and facilitates the international understanding and respect required to become global citizens (UNESCO, Education in a multilingual world, p33, 2003, UNESCO, Global citizenship education, p14, 2014). As a result, we promote bilingualism and multilingualism among students to improve their learning capacity and find belonging in our multicultural community (Carder, Bilingualism in international schools, p13, 2017, IBO, Language Policy, p1, 2014).

We recognise, in accordance with the principles and practices of the International Baccalaureate (IBO, Programme standards and practices, p24, 2014), that because language is central to learning, all teachers are, in fact, language teachers. Every teacher is responsible for assisting students in developing literacy skills.

In summary:

The BISP language policy promotes and fosters multilingualism and inclusivity. It aims to create a welcoming environment where students of all backgrounds can thrive. By developing strong communication skills in multiple languages, students become better learners and more prepared for the globalised world.

2. Responsibilities

2.1. School Principals and Deputy Principals:

- Have oversight of all matters relating to Language provision.
- Implement this policy in relation to the respective school (Primary and Secondary).
- Monitor the implementation of this policy and report to the Headmaster regarding progress.
- Ensure that school culture and working practice characterise and reflect the sentiment held within this policy.



- Report and respond to concerns, complaints, or contraventions relating to this policy.
- Manage systems and processes that coordinate and schedule students within all aspects of Language provision in collaboration with the Primary and Secondary Leadership Teams, Heads of Faculty, Heads of Year and ICT Director.

2.2. Relevant Heads of Faculty and Heads of Year:

- Assume responsibility for assessing (including online assessments and appropriate language level testing) and placing students on the correct language pathway and at the right developmental level.
- Liaise with teachers to ensure targeted intervention meets the language needs of all learners.

2.3. Teachers:

- Implement this policy by planning for a wide range of pedagogical opportunities in consideration of language strengths and needs.
- Actively seek to reflect on their practice and engage with new teaching and learning strategies and initiatives as appropriate.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues and the leadership teams to share best practice to improve outcomes for language learners.

3. BISP Language Profile

1. **Majority English Learners:** While many students are fluent, English is not the native language for most.
2. **English as Instruction:** All classes are taught in English, preparing students for English-medium universities.
3. **Home Language Diversity:** Over 40 nationalities are represented at BISP, with English, Thai, Russian, and Mandarin being some common home languages.
4. **Thai Language Emphasis:** Thai language and culture courses are offered at all levels, with 15-30% of students taking Thai at a higher level.
5. **Additional Languages:** Starting in Year 3, students choose an additional language, with options for Asian and European languages.
6. **IGCSE Language Requirements:** Students take either English as a first or second language, with an additional language encouraged.
7. **IB Diploma Language Options:** Students choose English Language & Literature or English B, with a wide range of other languages offered (Language A, Self-taught, Language B, Ab Initio).
8. **Bilingual IB Graduates:** Approximately 33% of graduates earn a bilingual IB Diploma.

4. The Language of Instruction

English is the language of instruction used in all learning environments at British International School, Phuket (with the exception of Thai studies and Modern Languages) and the language in which all students can communicate with each other.

Exemptions may occur when:

- Students require assistance in adjusting to new educational settings (particularly if they are completing the Intensive English Course)
- Students are in distress or require emotional support.
- Discussion in their home language(s) aims to achieve or deepen comprehension of subject content known as trans-languaging (Garcia and Wei, Translanguaging, 2014)

At BISP, we promote English as an inclusive language and encourage students to speak English with their peers; however, this encouragement is administered sensitively and with respect for our school community's diversity (IBO, Learning diversity and inclusion, p10, 2020).

5. Thai Language and Culture

Students of a non-English or non-Thai speaking background are immersed in the language and culture of Thailand, our host country. The school also meets or exceeds the standards set by the Thai education authorities for teaching Thai to Thai nationals and Thai Language and Culture to all students. All students, staff and parents participate in Thai cultural events throughout the school year, led by the Thai Department. This enhances a deep understanding and respect of Thai culture.

6. Home Languages

The importance of home language(s) development in establishing a solid foundation for thinking processes, developing communicative and literacy competence, and maintaining cultural identity is widely acknowledged. The school aims to provide guidelines to parents and guardians where possible. In our libraries there are self-study resources (including some bilingual books) and students are encouraged to access appropriate self-taught courses, including IB diploma self-taught language A. In addition some students will sit for IGCSE language examinations which are supported by personal tutors in collaboration with the Head of Upper School.

The school aims to maintain on its teaching staff, teachers capable of supporting or advising on home language studies in Thai, French, Spanish, Mandarin and Russian. Outside of the formal curriculum, our after-school activity program provides some students with the opportunity to support their home

language(s) as well as host special events to celebrate and share their unique cultural identity with our BISP community.

7. Teaching and Learning Programmes

7.1. English Language and Literature Programmes

The English Language and literature curriculum aims to develop proficient literacy across common mediums of communication including written, visual and spoken modes as well as provide opportunities for exploring the rich intricacies of English literature.

From Early Years, the development of children's spoken language underpins all areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. English learning in KS1 focuses on developing the student's capability and confidence in spoken language, reading, writing and vocabulary development. The KS2 curriculum introduces a wider range of genres and text types and there is increased focus on the technical language of learning.

The KS3 curriculum develops key competencies of reading and writing across several important text types. There is a focus on developing effective and consistent academic writing as well as avenues for building creative literacy. The KS4 curriculum is focused on building skills sufficient for success in the IGCSE exams in First Language English and World Literature. These subjects work well to prepare students for the challenges of the IB Language and Literature programmes offered in the Senior School.

7.2. English Language Acquisition

BISP recognises that ELL students in an English-speaking school system require appropriate support and guidance. The English Language Acquisition (ELA) Policy complements this Language Policy and details the specific pathways and support available to English Language Learners (ELL) whose first language is **not** English

7.3. Thai Language and Literature

Thai language is supported throughout the school, with specific Thai courses aimed at developing near-native Thai proficiency. However, given the limited time available for Thai language instruction in an English medium school, it is recognized that higher levels of Thai are usually accessible for students

who use Thai frequently outside of the formal classroom setting. Thai nationals are required by the Thai Ministry of Education to study Thai throughout their enrollment at BISP.

7.4. Thai Studies Course

Students in Years 1 to 9 take a Thai Studies course that includes items mandated by Thai authorities as well as additional extensions designed by the school. Students participate in major Thai festivals and visit local points of interest in addition to developing their Thai language skills, ensuring that all students are immersed in Thai through communicative and experiential approaches.

7.5. Thai Language Acquisition

This is available throughout Primary and Secondary Middle School. Unfortunately, currently there are no IGCSE or IB Diploma examination courses suitable for this level of Thai. Thai Language B and Thai Language A2 is offered throughout the school and will be included on student transcripts as a “BISP” internal course

7.6. Modern Languages (ML)

Opportunities to study a modern language typically include the following subjects:

- French
- Spanish
- Mandarin

The objectives of Modern Languages (ML) classes are for children to experience learning an additional language, and inspire a love of language learning. This language should be an additional language to the student's home or native language and, as such, students who are already competent in a particular language should choose a different one for their ML classes. Teachers aim to equip learners with basic language skills and language learning strategies (LLS) which will serve as a foundation for future language learning in school and beyond.

ML teaching begins in Year 3, offering an additional language to those who have been assessed as competent in English at the relevant stage level in Primary School, and who are not classed as Thai nationals required to take Thai Language. In the Secondary School the Modern Language programme is designed to provide students with the opportunity to develop in a language in addition to their home/personal/best language(s), and is not designed for students who already have the ability to communicate confidently and proficiently in that specific language. Competent speakers of French, Spanish, or Mandarin are not permitted to study their home language in the Secondary School programme, however they may be entered for the relevant IGCSE examination if deemed appropriate

and in consultation with the Head of ML Faculty and Head of Upper School. (Note: BISP Language courses in the middle school provide the necessary skills and knowledge in order to proceed to the IGCSE Language courses).

In the Upper School (IGCSE cohort) non-native speakers can opt to choose the Cambridge IGCSE Foreign Language (FL) course continuing with the same language they have taken in Middle school. In the IB Diploma Programme non-native language learners can opt to continue their language of choice as a language acquisition option as either: i) Language ab initio course for beginners (that is, students who have little or no previous experience of learning their chosen language). These courses are only available at standard level; or 2) Language B courses intended for students who have had some previous experience of learning the language. Language B may be studied at either higher level or standard level.

8. Assessment and Reporting

On entry to BISP students will be assessed to ensure that their future language learning at BISP is aligned to their specific skills, abilities and needs.

Students at BISP are regularly assessed to determine progress and to inform teaching and learning. For a full list of external assessments used to determine course pathways, please refer to appendix: Key languages assessments.

For reporting purposes, the official qualification will be used as published. Please refer to Appendix: Current Language specifications offered for current examining board specifications.

Appendices

**Appendix 1: Diploma Programme Language Acquisition and Language B Guide
International Baccalaureate, August 2021**

Language ab initio and language B are language acquisition courses designed to provide students with the necessary skills and intercultural understanding to enable them to communicate successfully in an environment where the language studied is spoken. This process allows the learner to go beyond the confines of the classroom, expanding their awareness of the world and fostering respect for cultural diversity. The two modern language courses—language ab initio and language B—develop students’ linguistic abilities through the development of receptive, productive and interactive skills (as defined in the “Syllabus content” section).

(Diploma Programme Language ab initio guide International Baccalaureate Organization, August 2021)

Language B is a language acquisition course designed for students with some previous experience of the target language. In the language B course, students further develop their ability to communicate in the target language through the study of language, themes and texts. In doing so, they also develop conceptual understandings of how language works, as appropriate to the level of the course.

(Diploma Programme Language B guide International Baccalaureate Organization, August 2021)

Language ab initio is a language acquisition course designed for students with no prior experience of the target language, or for those students with very limited previous exposure. It should be noted that language ab initio is offered at SL only.

(Diploma Programme Language ab initio guide International Baccalaureate, August 2021)

Appendix 2: Key languages assessments

Year group	Assessment
1	Cambridge English Pre-A1 Starters, A1 Movers
2	No Spanish, Thai or Mandarin Acquisition assessments
3	English Literacy: GL PT Series English test for Year 3-6 and PM Reading Benchmark Assessments
4	WIDA Paper Based
5	Cambridge English Pre-A1 Starters, A1 Movers, A2 Flyers
6	No Spanish, Thai or Mandarin Acquisition assessments



Year group	Assessment
	WIDA Model Online
7	Cambridge English A2 Key for Schools or B1 Preliminary for Schools
8	Adapted from English National Curriculum (ENC) Levels in English Language & Literature
9	
	Spanish and Mandarin Acquisition assessments informed by ENC and IB Middle Years Programme
	Thai Acquisition assessments follow Thai curriculum standards
	Thai Language & Literature assessments follow Thai curriculum standards
	WIDA Model Online
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cambridge First Language English IGCSE ● Cambridge Literature in English IGCSE ● Cambridge First Language Thai IGCSE ● Cambridge Second Language English IGCSE <p>And/or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cambridge Foreign Language French IGCSE ● Cambridge Foreign Language Spanish IGCSE ● Cambridge Foreign Language Mandarin
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● BISP Thai Language ● Cambridge Second Language Chinese IGCSE <p>WIDA Model Online</p>
12	IB Diploma Studies in Languages & Literature (Thai and English) and Self Taught languages
13	IB Diploma Language Acquisition in English, French, Spanish or Mandarin
	WIDA Model Online

Appendix 3: Current Language specifications offered

Cambridge English Qualifications

[Pre-A1 Starters](#)

[A1 Movers](#)

[A2 Flyers](#)

[A2 Key for Schools](#)

[B1 Preliminary for Schools](#)

[B2 First for Schools](#)

WIDA

[WIDA Model](#)

Cambridge Assessment International Education

[IGCSE English - First Language \(0500\)](#)

[IGCSE Literature in English \(0475\)](#)

[IGCSE ESL \(Count-in speaking\) \(0511\)](#)

[IGCSE French - Foreign Language \(0520\)](#)

[IGCSE Mandarin Chinese - Foreign Language \(0547\)](#)

[IGCSE Spanish - Foreign Language \(0530\)](#)

[IGCSE Thai -First Language \(0518\)](#)

International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme

[Language ab initio \(SL\)](#)

[Language Acquisition](#)

[Language A: Language and Literature \(SL/HL\)](#)

[Language B \(SL/HL\)](#)

Appendix 4: Glossary

BICS: Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills

CALP: Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency

EAL: English as an Additional Language

ELA: English Language Acquisition

Host country language: The host country language is the language spoken in the community in which the school is located.

Home language(s): also known as mother tongue, first language, home language, preferred language and native language) describes the language that students use at home, and/or outside the classroom environment.

Language of Instruction: The language of instruction is the language in which the majority of the curriculum is delivered in the school.

ML: Modern Languages - at BISP these subjects are Mandarin Chinese, French, Spanish

Appendix 5: References

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