

CISD IB Diploma Programme Language policy

“A language policy is derived from the school’s language philosophy and is a statement of purpose that outlines goals for language teaching and learning. It is constructed around pedagogical and learning beliefs and is therefore also a statement of action describing practices for achieving and evaluating goals.”

- *Guidelines For Developing A School Language Policy, IBO Publication, 2008.*

Philosophy

At Compass International School Doha, we recognize and highly value the fundamental principle that language development is the key to effective learning, personal development and attainment. Language is the primary means of communication and is thus essential to lifelong learning and development. Effective language development enables us to access the level of knowledge required to excel in our academic subjects: it stimulates us to read for information as well as pleasure; to communicate clearly and effectively while intrinsically raising self-esteem and personal worth. It is one of our main aims to not allow a lack of language development to negatively impact on what we can achieve and how we see ourselves as both learners and citizens, therefore students must be able to utilize language confidently and appropriately in a manner of settings, both orally and in writing in a variety of contexts for a variety of purposes.

As an IB World School, students must become linguistically and culturally proficient in a second language and therefore the second language learning fosters cultural understanding and sensitivity. We believe that every teacher is a language teacher as language practice not only transcends curriculum areas but mutually reinforces each subject area within the IB Diploma’s concurrency of learning. At the heart of our Diploma language policy is Approaches to Teaching and Learning. We believe language development and ATL skills mutually develop one another. We believe all ATL skills are language skills- communication, social, research, self-management and thinking skills and as teachers we strive to instill, develop and inspire students to develop both language and ATL skills in a mutually positive manner. Additionally, both teachers and students have an awareness of the centrality of the importance of language as a way of knowing in theory of knowledge and therefore are aware of the centrality of language in the production of knowledge.



Language Profile

Diversity of language, communication used within the school

The language of instruction at Compass International School, Doha is English. The language of communication between school and parents is English and Arabic. 18% of our students are Qatari with Arabic as their first language. Additionally 13% of students come from neighbouring Middle Eastern countries meaning almost one-third of students have Arabic as their mother tongue. 35% of our students come from countries where English is the first language and with over 70 nationalities we have a wide varying language profile.

Governmental language requirements

By the law of the State of Qatar, Arabic language is compulsory subject for all Arabic native speakers up to the age of 16.

By the law of their national governments, Dutch and Belgian students must follow Dutch or French and this is provided by an external organization called Language One.

IB language profile and current practices relating to language and teaching

English A is offered as a Group 1 subject. In addition we promote student native language studies through SSST and in the recent past have had students study Spanish, Dutch, German and Finnish in SSST. In Group 2 we offer Spanish and French both at ab initio and B level. Spanish and French are popular choices at IGCSE and offering both B language and ab initio ensures we can offer the appropriate level of second language according to student requirements. B language will normally be offered dependent on a good grade in IGCSE or national equivalents.

English and SSST at group 1 and Spanish and French ab initio/B at group 2 allows students a popular choice of world languages but with sensitivity to individual language identity. All requests for SSST studies have been granted displaying that as a school we take cultural identity very important in language teaching.

From the start of the first year of the IB Diploma programme, students are taught footnoting and referencing protocols (Harvard and MLA) and are encouraged to use these consistently. This important aspect of language learning encourages and fosters academic honesty. Students attend footnoting and referencing workshops in the first and second year of the programme maintain this awareness. Teaching staff encourage the use of footnoting and referencing in the appropriate work. Additionally, IB glossaries of key are used to Language

usage in the classroom is English with the exception of French and Spanish and the expectation is that students use this language to ensure understanding within the diverse range of first languages our students possess.

Beliefs held about language teaching and learning

As our philosophy displays, we clearly hold that language is an essential element in student development and attainment as well as building individual cultural identity as well as appreciating others. Our teaching staff are aware of the crucial role that they play in the development of language skills and are keenly aware that all teachers are language teachers. This fundamental point is central to the concurrency of an IB student's learning and allows them to view their DP holistically. All learner profile traits have language at their centre and learner profile lessons are conducted with this in mind

Students are given the opportunity to express written and oral language in a number of ways and in a number of contexts within their academic studies as well as extra-curricular activities such as Model United Nations and the Duke of Edinburgh award.

Admissions and assessment

Compass international School, Doha accepts students from diverse ethnic, linguistic and national backgrounds. Students should be proficient in English when entering the DP programme but no prior knowledge of French or Spanish is required due to our ab initio courses. When students of all ages apply for a place at our school, they sit a CAT4 test and an English language test. The English language test is fed back to the head of English who marks it with the result being sent to admissions, ALN department and the phase leader (KS3, IGCSE, IB) concerned. Based upon the English score, intervention and booster English sessions may be advised and undertaken.

Linking policy

The language policy links with admissions policies as well continuing assessment such as formative and summative assessments. It also links with SEN/inclusion policy.

Language steering group

A language policy document is a 'living document' and as such is subject to review and modification. For the purposes of review and modification, the steering group consists of Head of Secondary, IB Coordinator, Heads of Groups 1 and 2 and other interested parties. The policy is discussed with teaching staff and other stakeholders and contributions are welcomed.