



MEF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS LANGUAGE PROCEDURE

STATEMENT OF AIM

At MEF International School, we strive to create a stimulating and supportive learning environment where English is the primary language of instruction. We promote multilingualism and celebrate linguistic diversity, recognizing language as a means to understand and interact with the world. We consider each student's unique background, experiences, skills, and interests in our teaching and learning processes. Multilingualism and critical literacy are essential in cultivating international-mindedness, fostering cultural identity, intercultural awareness, and global citizenship.

We are committed to developing confident, curious, and highly proficient readers, writers, viewers, presenters, speakers, and listeners through all our teaching programs. As all teachers are responsible for language development, we encourage collaboration and sharing of ideas and resources across different sections. Language development planning and assessment align with the scope and sequences outlined in our school guidelines.

RATIONALE

We emphasize meaningful and contextual language instruction through real-life scenarios, native speakers, local surroundings, and diverse text types. Language learning is facilitated through inquiry-based approaches, enabling students to connect with context and explore new ideas. Language development is a continuous process, building upon each student's existing knowledge to promote growth and progression.

LANGUAGE AT MEF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

English is the primary language of instruction at MEF International School. We recognize that acquiring social language competence occurs relatively quickly, while developing academic and cognitive competence takes longer. Consequently, all teachers are considered English language educators, and language acquisition is an integral aspect of every learning experience.

Through our admissions policy and in-school support provisions, we strive to ensure that all students can access the curriculum in English. Instruction is differentiated and scaffolded for non-native English learners.

A robust mother tongue foundation is crucial for learning additional languages. Our school community consists of thirty-five different home languages. Although we do not offer mother tongue instruction within our academic programs (except for Turkish in high school), we encourage students to use and develop their home languages. Mother tongues are supported in school when they facilitate learning. However, we also promote English usage as the common language among students, fostering both English development and inclusivity.

As an international school in Istanbul, we celebrate the Turkish language and culture as our host country. We also offer French and Spanish as modern foreign languages.

In line with our commitment as an IB World School, we adhere to the following practices:

1. The school values language learning, including mother tongue, host country language, and other languages (IB Standard A, Practice 7).
2. The school utilizes community resources and expertise to enhance learning within the programs (IB Standard B2, Practice 11).
3. Collaborative planning and reflection acknowledge that all teachers are responsible for students' language development (IB Standard C1, Practice 8).
4. Teaching and learning address the diverse language needs of students, including those learning languages other than their mother tongue (IB Standard C3, Practice 7).
5. Teaching and learning demonstrate that all teachers are responsible for students' language development (IB Standard C3, Practice 8).
6. Assessment at the school aligns with the requirements of the program(s) (IB Standard C4, Practice 1).

PRIMARY SCHOOL PROCEDURES

Mainstream English Language

The mainstream English Language Programme, aligned with the IB philosophy and current research on language development, focuses on the four main language strands: speaking and listening, reading, writing, and viewing and presenting. Lessons are designed to engage students in meaningful and authentic contexts, promoting the development of critical thinking and communication skills. Learning may be integrated into transdisciplinary units of inquiry or taught as stand-alone lessons, allowing for a flexible and responsive curriculum. The reading specialist and learning support teacher collaborate with mainstream teachers to offer targeted support based on individual student needs. For further information about the mainstream English Language Curriculum, please see the English Language Curriculum document.

Pull Out Lessons

Pull-out lessons are designed to support beginner and intermediate ELL students from Kindergarten to Grade 5. These lessons take place during MFL sessions and aim to address individual language development needs. The program begins with social English, focusing on school routines, communication, and conversation. As students develop their language proficiency, the

program shifts towards supporting the transdisciplinary units of inquiry themes and addressing specific needs based on teacher requests and individual student requirements. Regular communication between the ELL teacher and homeroom teachers ensures a tailored approach for each student's language development.

In-Class Support

ELL teachers provide in-class support for individuals or small groups based on each student's language development needs and the number of ELL students in the class. Support may include reading groups, literature circles, learning centers, or assistance with units of inquiry. Teaching Assistants also support classroom teachers by working with ELL students to reinforce language skills and scaffold their understanding of content. This collaborative approach ensures that ELL students receive the necessary support to develop their language proficiency while participating in mainstream classroom activities.

Modern Foreign Languages

In the primary school, students may choose either French or Spanish as their modern foreign language if ELL intensive support is not required. Instruction is provided at beginner or intermediate levels (phases 1 to 3, with exceptional extension to phase 4 from the PYP language scope and sequence). Students fluent in one of these languages are expected to learn the other language to promote a diverse language learning experience. The MFL program adopts a communicative approach, emphasizing the development of students' communication skills in the chosen foreign language. Lessons are integrated into the Programme of Inquiry, ensuring an authentic learning experience aligned with the transdisciplinary themes and concepts of the PYP.

Development of Mother tongue

The school recognizes the importance of maintaining and developing students' mother tongue languages. To support this, new students are often initially paired with others who share the same mother tongue to facilitate learning and socialization. Signage in different languages is displayed throughout the school, promoting a multilingual environment. Parents are encouraged to organize after-school mother tongue lessons, for which the school can provide a suitable location.

The library maintains a "World Languages" section, featuring books in various mother tongue languages. Contributions from families in the form of donated books and annual acquisitions help to expand this collection. During Reading Week, a "Reading Around the World" day allows parents to read stories in their mother tongue to interested students, fostering an appreciation for linguistic diversity. High school students also form mother tongue learning groups, providing additional support and mentorship to younger students in their language development.

Turkish language Learning

Turkish Language and Culture lessons incorporate elementary Turkish language learning and cultural education. Fluent Turkish speakers engage in independent study under teacher guidance, while non-fluent students focus on language acquisition. These lessons aim to promote intercultural understanding and appreciation among all students.

SECONDARY SCHOOL PROCEDURES

Mainstream English Language

The language of instruction in the Secondary School is English. First and second language (language B) English courses are offered at all grade levels. In middle school, the first language classes are at the same level (although divided into two teaching groups). In high school, students in grades 9 and 10 take either the English Language and Literature course or the English Language course. The Administration (Principal, Deputy Principals) and Literature Department Head decides on the groupings, taking into consideration previous performance and teacher recommendations. Students new to the school take a placement test. Students in IB1/Grade 11 and IB2/Grade 12 take the Diploma course in English Language. All subject teachers are supported and encouraged to make the curriculum accessible to learners with varied levels of English.

English Language Learning Support (ELL programme)

For assessment and placement criteria, please see the 'Student Support Team Procedures' document [Learning Support Procedure - SS](#)

ELL students are identified through the use of both quantitative and qualitative data and receive continuous support from ELL specialists until they are academically proficient. ELL is taught during the scheduled French/Spanish class time, as well as during English lessons where students are placed in the second language/English B class. Students that exit out of the ELL class are monitored and supported for two years.

In-class Support

In addition to out-of-class support, ELL students receive in-class support from ELL Specialists. ELL Specialists also coordinate with class teachers in order to support the ELL students effectively. Formal and informal assessments for ELL students are reviewed by the ELL Specialists and modified if necessary.

Modern Foreign Languages

Students in the ELL programme do not learn French or Spanish until they have exited from the ELL support class. During the admissions process, all non-native English students are assessed. If ELL support is not required, then parents and students may select either French or Spanish.

Instruction is usually provided at beginner or intermediate level, so if a student is already fluent in one of these languages they are expected to learn the other language. It is expected that students will remain in their initial choice of MFL throughout their time in the school.

Our curriculum allows for mixed ability groups within grades 6, 7, and 8. The goal is that students finishing grade 8 should all be at a minimum of A2 level CECR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages).

Grades 9 and 10 are taught the IGCSE French/Spanish Foreign Language curriculum.

In grade 11/IB1 students are offered either French/Spanish ab initio or French/Spanish B, depending upon their language level, exam results, and teacher recommendation. However, if a student has studied the language for more than 2 years, they will not be permitted to choose the AB Initio curriculum. Changes can be made within the first month of IB1; after this the student must continue in the selected course until the conclusion of grade 12/IB2.

All grades study the same curriculum in both French and Spanish and the teachers are encouraged to collaborate in the planning and differentiation in the classroom.

Development of Mother Tongue

Students in middle school are encouraged to speak their mother tongue at home and to take advantage of the after school activities programme in cases in which their mother tongue is supported. At the Middle School level, first language courses in Turkish are offered once a week alongside a course titled Host Country Studies.

Students in grades 9 and 10 studying from the National School are required to study Turkish language and literature classes. International students with fluency in the language may also study in these classes.

In the IB Diploma Programme, mother tongue languages are recognized by providing special request and self-taught options in Group 1 with the goal of developing the mother tongues of those students whose mother tongues are not English or Turkish. A teacher from the IB Diploma Programme collaborating with the DP Coordinator will help self-taught students to compile an appropriate books list and articulate internal and external assessment requirements.

All IB Diploma Programme teachers are to familiarise students with subject-specific technical vocabulary and the subject-specific command terms listed in the individual syllabi.

Throughout the Secondary School, mother tongues are celebrated in a variety of ways, for example during assemblies and celebrations along with in the decor of the school. There are books in the library in different languages.

Turkish Language Learning

In middle school, students take Host Country Studies, in which both Turkish culture and language are studied as a first or second language. First language Turkish courses are offered in the IGCSE and Diploma Programmes

Document History		
Date	Details	Responsible
August 2018	Policy created	Figen Sonmez
January 2020	Policy updated	Daniel Slevin
May 2020	Policy updated	Beliz Kearin
April 2023	Policy updated	Beliz Kearin, Marzhan Abenova, Nathalie Beuret