



Language Policy

English Secondary and IB

Edited by:	TANIA MCMAHON <i>IB DP Coordinator</i> MARIE GALMICHE <i>Director of English Secondary</i> SANDRA LALOMIA ARYAL <i>MFL Coordinator</i>
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Introduction

The Institut International de Lancy (IIL) is a multicultural, multilingual teaching and learning community that fosters an intercultural understanding amongst our diverse student and teacher body. This understanding involves recognising and reflecting on one's own perspectives, as well as those of others.

We believe that multilingualism is essential for building intercultural awareness, as language mastery enhances communication and is central to learning.

Overview of our School

IIL Primary is divided into three separate sections: English, French, and Bilingual (50% French and 50% English). The English and French sections have bilingual elements integrated into their curriculum.

As students progress from Primary to Secondary, the focus on bilingualism continues. IIL Secondary is divided into two separate sections: English and French. In English Secondary, English is the first language of the majority of our students and most subjects are taught in English.

Language Requirements for Admission

As stated in our Admissions Policy¹, students can only be accepted into English Secondary if we have the resources to meet their learning needs. This includes only accepting students whose language profile aligns with the support services we offer. To access the International Baccalaureate® (IB) Diploma Programme at IIL a student needs to have a working knowledge of English.

English Instruction

All students from Years 7 - 11 study English as a first language. They are prepared for the Cambridge Checkpoint English examination² at the end of Year 9. In Year 11, they sit the Cambridge IGCSE English First Language³, and the Cambridge IGCSE English Literature examinations⁴. Language support may be recommended to ensure a student can access our educational programmes⁵.

Local Language Instruction

¹ see the IIL *English Secondary and IB Admissions Policy (2024)*

² <https://www.cambridgeinternational.org/programmes-and-qualifications/cambridge-lower-secondary/assessment/cambridge-checkpoint/>

³ <https://www.cambridgeinternational.org/programmes-and-qualifications/cambridge-igcse-english-first-language-0500/>

⁴ <https://www.cambridgeinternational.org/programmes-and-qualifications/english-literature-0475/>

⁵ see the IIL *English Secondary and IB Inclusion Policy (2024)*



IIL is located in Geneva, a French speaking region of Switzerland. French is also the administrative language of the school. Hence all students in English Secondary from Years 7 - 11 study French. Following assessment and a review of their previous language learning experiences, students are placed in the appropriate French level—beginner, intermediate, advanced, or native speaker. Students are expected to maintain their placement or progress to higher levels over time, without regressing in their language proficiency. Students sit the Cambridge IGCSE French Foreign language examination⁶ in either Year 9, Year 10 or Year 11 depending on their level. French native speakers sit the Cambridge International A-level in French Language and Literature⁷ at the end of Year 11.

German is compulsory for students in Year 7, and optional in subsequent years. Students can choose to study Italian in the IB Diploma Programme.

Foreign Language Instruction

Spanish is offered as an alternative to German from Years 8 - 11, and as an option in the IB Diploma Programme.

Mother-Tongue Language (other than English or French) Support

Students enrolled in the IB Diploma Programme have the opportunity to study their first or best language through the School Supported Self-Taught Mother Tongue Language programme. With assistance from an external tutor proficient in the relevant language and under the supervision of an IB Language A teacher from our staff, students receive the guidance they require.

Students are also encouraged to take the IGCSE examination in their Mother Tongue language (if available) at the end of Year 11.

Language Placement

Students in Years 7 - 11 are placed in language classes based on their level. The language curriculum is designed to ensure that they build the necessary skills to progress into the appropriate class in the IB Diploma Programme.

In Year 12, students are placed in a language level which is deemed to provide a sufficient challenge. Placement is based upon the IB Language Placement Guidelines⁸:

⁶ <https://www.cambridgeinternational.org/programmes-and-qualifications/cambridge-igcse-french-foreign-language-0520/>

⁷ <https://www.cambridgeinternational.org/programmes-and-qualifications/cambridge-international-as-and-a-level-french-language-literature-9898/>

⁸ “DP Language Courses: overview and placement guidance”: IBO (last updated August 2021)



- Students are placed in a **Language ab initio** course if they have limited or no exposure to the language.
- Students are placed in a **Language B** course if they have prior experience of the language.
 - **Language B SL** is reserved for students who can communicate using the language in familiar contexts.
 - To be placed in **Language B HL**, a student must be able to communicate in the language in a variety of different contexts and with a variety of different purposes.
- Students are placed in a **Language A** course if they can read, analyse and respond to complex literary and non-literary texts in the target language.

IIL recognises that language placement can be complex. For that reason, a student's prior learning and their language profile are used to make a valued assessment of the appropriate language course. The IB grade descriptors underpin the decisions⁸.

Where possible students are given a choice of at least one SL and one HL language course that is appropriate to their language profile.

If appropriate, students are encouraged to prepare for the Bilingual or the Advanced Bilingual IB Diploma.

Should a student, parent or legal guardian wish to appeal the language placement, they can request a review by the Language Placement Committee (LPC)⁹.

Progression of Language Proficiency

IIL has a team of language coordinators and pedagogical directors to ensure that there is alignment amongst subjects taught in parallel, and progression over time. For non-native speakers, the school makes special arrangements, in the form of differentiated instruction or additional language support lessons¹⁰.

IIL believes that all teachers play a crucial role in language development, regardless of the subject they teach. By integrating language learning across the curriculum, we ensure that students are continuously enhancing their linguistic skills in every classroom. This holistic approach not only fosters a deeper

⁹ See the IIL *Student, Parent or Legal Guardian Grievance Policy (2024)*

¹⁰ See the IIL *English Secondary and IB Inclusion Policy (2024)*



understanding of course material but also equips students with the communication tools essential for success in a multilingual world.

*This policy forms part of the **English Secondary Staff Handbook** and the **IB Student - Parent/Guardian Handbook**.*