



Beijing BISS International School
北京BISS国际学校

BEIJING BISS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL LANGUAGE POLICY

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Section 1 – Statement of Philosophy

At Beijing BISS International School (BISS), students learn languages, learn through languages, and learn about languages in an environment where they are actively engaged in inquiry and problem solving, making meaning, thinking reflectively and building lasting understandings. Since language is central to learning, all teachers are, in practice, language teachers. Our school's core values and strategic objectives promote an environment where language acquisition permeates the curriculum. Therefore, teaching and learning languages is integrated within all subjects' areas and units.

As an IB World School, we strive to provide a multicultural educational environment to assist students in becoming active global citizens. One important way to attain this aim is to promote the learning of languages in addition to one's mother tongue. Therefore, a major goal of BISS is to help students to become proficient in another language, with the ability to listen, speak, read and write proficiently in at least two languages.

Section 2 – Language of Instruction

BISS students experience an enriched, language-immersion education in which English is the primary language of instruction. An appropriate level of English-language proficiency in both basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) is the linguistic goal of the curriculum as students' progress through our programs. Research confirms that this growth will result from designing and delivering instruction and assessment around articulated standards of achievement.

In addition to its function as the medium of instruction, BISS also promotes the explicit teaching of English language and literature through Language Arts in the PYP, English Language & Literature and English Acquisition in the MYP and English A – Language & Literature, as well as English B in the Diploma Program.

BISS uses multidimensional language procedures to screen applicants, make placement decisions and measure progress in English language development and academic achievement. Our multidimensional assessment procedures include English language-proficiency tests, classroom-based assessments, standardized assessments, external examinations, appraisal of records and current educational levels, and observation of emotional and social development.

Section 3 – Support for Language of Instruction

Students who are admitted to BISS with beginning levels of English are supported in the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programme. Students exit the ESOL programme when/ if their performance on assessments indicates that they will benefit from such a change. BISS is committed to providing students with a programme that is most suited to their present and future needs in the context of an academically challenging environment. See ESOL Handbook for more information.

Therefore, all teachers are expected to:

- Integrate the teaching of language into all units and subject areas.
- Assist students in discovering language structures and broadening vocabulary. They should also encourage students to reflect on the language and develop language awareness (including but not limited to purpose, form and audience).
- Create classroom environments that have plentiful opportunities for students to listen, speak, read, write, view and present through interactive activities.
- Provide students with learning experiences that enrich their language development, including auditory and visual stimuli.
- Promote students' language development according to the IB learner profile.
- Use a wide range of strategies to teach language through a balanced language programme which includes listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and presenting across all subject areas.
- Acknowledge and cater for differences in development stages, learning styles and previous language experience.
- Not force students to speak or read aloud before they are ready.
- Provide differentiated learning materials, appropriate to the students' current stage of language development.
- Use a wide range of formative and summative assessment strategies to assess and report on language and academic progress.
- Use the results of student performance to reflect and refine programmes.
- Build home-school partnership using various means of communication.
- Work collaboratively to develop inclusive and developmentally appropriate curriculum and teaching strategies.
- Integrate appropriate media and technology that enhance language development.
- Reinforce citing and referencing protocols as outlined in the Academic Honesty Policy.

- Select resources that are linguistically accessible and culturally inclusive.
- Provide exemplars and other appropriate scaffolding tools.
- Keep abreast of the most current research regarding language acquisition and teaching methodology.

BISS has an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Programme staffed with English language specialist teachers who provide support and instruction for English language learners. ESOL specialist teachers are instrumental to the successful implementation of this model. ESOL specialists have knowledge of the first language and second language acquisition, culture, grade-level subject matter, instructional resources and assessment tools. They consult, collaborate and co-teach with classroom and subject teachers to meaningfully connect second language acquisition principles with daily classroom practices and create a challenging and responsive learning environment for all students in mainstream classrooms. However, since learning and language are inextricably bound, teachers are therefore both a content teacher and a language teacher. Thus, responsibilities for language-immersion and language development do not rest exclusively with the ESOL specialists, but rather are shared with all teachers.

In the Elementary School, ESOL collaborates with classroom teachers to support ESOL students, with the overarching goal being the inclusion of ESOL students in the classroom environment. These teachers discuss the objectives of instruction, and the ESOL specialist teacher then prepares scaffolded material and teaching strategies to help ESOL students comprehend lessons and perform successfully.

In the Secondary School, ESOL students are enrolled in English Language Acquisition classes. This is similar to the English Language & Literature class that more advanced and native speaking English students attend, in that identical skills and genres are taught and assessed. The difference is that the content is carefully structured at a simpler and more contextualized English level so that ESOL learners have a greater opportunity for success.

ESOL teachers also support students, in Grades 6 – 10, during their Individuals & Societies and Science classes (in-class support). ESOL teachers work directly with individuals or small groups of ESOL students to assist them to be successful in these classes. Support is provided in these two particular subject areas, as they require students to be well versed in a significant amount of specialized academic English. ESOL teachers collaborate with teachers in these subject areas to design and prepare carefully scaffolded lessons and materials, which support the specific language needs of ESOL students.

In addition, students with specific learning needs in the area of language are also supported through inclusive (in-class) support with trained Special Education Needs center (SEN) support teachers. The interplay between language and learning make determining learning difficulties complex for children who are learning an additional language. Consequently, it is often unclear whether limited language proficiency in English is interfering with learning or is masking a learning difficulty. Thus, ESOL specialists, SEN specialists and classroom teachers collaborate to meet both the language and learning needs of these students. This occurs formally through Kid Chat meetings where student information is collected, and strategies are devised to enable support, differentiation and tracking of progress (see SEN Handbook).

Table 1. ESOL level and descriptors

Grade	ESOL Level and Description (PYP)			
1-5	ESOL basic beginner to elementary	ESOL elementary to intermediate	ESOL intermediate to advanced	Mainstream English Native to near native English language proficiency
	* Basic Beginning English learners	* Students use their own variety of English language to communicate needs, express ideas and ask questions. They understand spoken language relating to personal and social interests and respond in their own way. They are becoming aware of appropriate ways of interacting in familiar situations. (First steps – Early Phase)	*Students use most language structures and features of English appropriately when speaking in a range of contexts. They show increasing awareness of the needs of their audience. They experiment with ways to adjust to suit different purposes. (First steps – Consolidation Phase)	* Students recognise and control most language structures and features of English when speaking for a range of purposes. They select and sustain language and style appropriate to audience and purpose. They are aware of the value of planning and reflecting to improve the effectiveness of communication. (First Steps – Conventional Phase)

Grade	English Acquisition (MYP)			English Literature and Language (MYP)
6-10	Key terms: Emergent Phases 1-2	Key terms: Capable Phases 3-4	Key terms: Proficient Phases 5-6	Native or near native
	*NB: teachers and students might be familiar with different key terms such as beginner, elementary, intermediate and advanced language proficiency levels, or different frameworks such as IELTS or CEFR. Please speak to the language department coordinator to discuss key terms and framework equivalences.			Achieved a minimum of '6' in English Acquisition or phase '5' over two consecutive quarters, teacher recommendation.

Section 4 – Maintenance of Language Profiles

BISS maintains current and comprehensive student language profiles. These records include information about mother tongue, other languages of communication and progress with English or additional languages. Following our Admissions procedures and Assessment Policies, teachers have access to admissions language tests, previous report cards, parent surveys and questionnaires, entry interviews and standardized assessment data. Moreover, as the effectiveness of any assessment is structured by the nature of the larger system in which it is embedded, the elementary and secondary school carefully align types of language assessment that are carried out within a learning process with the taught, written and assessed curriculums across the International Baccalaureate (IB) Continuum. For the elementary school, we use First Steps which has been created by the Education Department of Western Australia and provides a developmental continuum, a framework, for linking assessment with teaching and learning that easily aligns with the IB Primary Years Programme in our context. For the secondary school, the IB Middle Years Programme, ESOL assessments align with written and taught curriculum subject criterion and strands from Language Acquisition (MYP phases 1-5). The frameworks for linking assessment with teaching and learning thus occur through matching student work with the descriptors and behaviors, not by making immediate judgments. The continua have been developed to provide teachers with a way of looking at what children can actually do and how they can do it, in order to inform planning for further development. Moreover, developmental continua, running records, sequence documents, formative and summative assessment data and informal discussion with students are used to inform teachers' understanding of students' language progress. Furthermore,

formal and informal parent interviews, student-teacher conferences, student reflections and daily observation enable teachers to understand students’ language background, current experiences and ongoing needs. Confidential portions of this data are stored in academic files, and students manage their digital portfolios, which contain non-confidential information.

Section 5 – Language of the Host Country

BISS is located in Beijing, China and actively promotes the importance of learning the Chinese language and about Chinese culture.

Primary Years Programme (PYP)

Placement: New students are placed according to past experience, information provided by parents on admission and teacher observation.

Progression: Students progress from one level to another after assessment by teachers of student test results and class work regarding their proficiency in writing, reading, speaking and listening.

Table 2. Chinese in the Elementary school

Beginner	Elementary to Intermediate	Intermediate to Advanced	Native
1 year or less experience	1-3 year experience	3-5 years experience	Native or near native speaker

Middle Years Programme and Diploma Programme (MYP and DP)

Placement: New students are finally placed after a maximum of 4 weeks according to results from school- consisting of 1000-character comprehension over two articles, 400-word test and speaking observations. Teachers use results to guide placement. Placement processes may be updated and adjusted accordingly with no prior notice at any time.

Progression: The following prerequisites are also offered for consideration when determining when a student progresses from one level to another.

Table 3. Chinese in the Secondary school

Chinese Language Acquisition			Language and Literature
Beginner	Elementary to Intermediate	Intermediate to Advanced	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 year or less experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-3 year experience Achieved a minimum '5' in Chinese Language Acquisition Beginner over two consecutive quarters, teacher recommendation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3-5 years experience Achieved a minimum '5' in Chinese Language Acquisition Intermediate over two consecutive quarters, teacher recommendation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Native or near native speaker Achieved a minimum '6' in Chinese Language Acquisition Advanced over two consecutive quarters, teacher recommendation.

Section 6 – Additional Languages

BISS is committed to a programme of foreign languages that promotes intercultural awareness and understanding and supports our goal of developing global citizens. As a result, nearly all students from Grades K to 12 study an additional language. Chinese Language & Literature (6 to 12) and Chinese Language Acquisition, and Chinese B or Ab Initio. Japanese and Korean Language & Literature are also offered (6 – 12). Furthermore, in Grades 11 and 12 students may choose to attend an online course in another language based on the list of options offered by the accredited provider, which is PAMOJA Education, for an extra cost. In K – Grade 5, all students study the language of the host country, China, unless they are Basic Beginner ESOL students. In this case, such students are enrolled in a six-week Basic Beginner Programme, which focuses on “survival” English language skills to ensure functionality in the classroom.

Placement: Placement in a level is based on the students’ experience, language spoken at home and expertise of spoken language used in an informal interview.

Progression: The following prerequisites are also offered for consideration when determining when a student progresses from one level to another.

Table 4. Korean in the Secondary school

Korean Language Acquisition			Language and Literature
Beginner	Elementary to Intermediate	Intermediate to Advanced	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 year or less experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-3 year experience Achieved a minimum '5' in Chinese Language Acquisition Beginner over two consecutive quarters, teacher recommendation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3-5 years experience Achieved a minimum '5' in Chinese Language Acquisition Intermediate over two consecutive quarters, teacher recommendation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Native or near native speaker Achieved a minimum '6' in Chinese Language Acquisition Advanced over two consecutive quarters, teacher recommendation.

- **KOREAN** – offered only at Language and Literature level for native or near native speakers
- **JAPANESE** - offered only at Language and Literature level for level for native or near native speakers

Section 7 – Mother Tongue Development

In accordance with IB policy, BISS recognizes the importance of maintaining and developing a student’s mother tongue. Literacy in the first language is recognized as an essential factor in the development of a student’s self-esteem and cultural identity and is a critical component of successful learning in English, intellectual growth and the acquisition of other languages. BISS strongly promotes additive bilingualism, where students attain proficiency in other languages while continuing to develop their mother tongue.

BISS encourages and supports mother tongue development in After School Activities (ASAs) and community initiatives as a means of facilitating mother tongue maintenance and development. In the Elementary School, the Buddy Reading program is also designed to celebrate and strengthen mother tongue languages. Where possible, students are paired with a buddy who shares the same mother tongue. The students participate in a variety of literacy activities in their mother tongue, such as reading, speaking and writing (relevant to the Unit of Inquiry). Thus, students are given opportunities to build conceptual connections, reflect upon language structures and develop transference between the two languages. In the Secondary School, BISS provides Chinese, Japanese

and Korean Language & Literature classes. These three courses cater to the three main language groups represented in our school community. IB Courses and Diploma Programmes students may also be granted permission, to either study self-taught Language A Language & Literature or Literature courses or “attend” online ones, upon request and availability.

BISS strongly affirms that the environment parents provide for their children is the most significant variable in promoting mother tongue maintenance and development. Through face-to-face workshops, close collaboration with the PTA, parent-teacher interviews, written communication and multilingual resources, BISS supports parents in understanding their children’s language profile and developmental journey. Parents are strongly encouraged to provide a rich mother tongue environment for their children at all levels of the educational continuum.

Section 8 – Professional Development

BISS is committed and committed by the International Baccalaureate Organisation on providing all teachers with on-going professional development. We believe it is important for them to develop their skills and expand their knowledge of best practices when teaching students who are developing proficiency in English within mainstream classrooms. This is achieved through professional training in current second language-acquisition research.

All staff, including teachers, administrators, and librarians at BISS are required to complete the ‘Making it Comprehensible’ course. This has been adapted from the previous ‘ESOL in the Mainstream’ course and caters specifically to the needs of teachers in our school context. The modules focus on distinct areas of ESOL pedagogy and emphasize classroom applicability through the provision of resources. The course provides teachers with a framework for understanding ESOL theory and empowers them to use best practice in their classrooms. The culmination of the course is an action research project in which teachers gather additional data on student language needs and test new pedagogy in their classrooms. This enhances the practices of our faculty in meeting language profiles. BISS also promotes external professional development opportunities and supports teachers to attend training provided by the IB or other professional organisations.

Section 9 – Resources

BISS POLICIES & HANDBOOKS

BISS (2019) Academic Honesty Policy, BISS: Beijing, P.R.C.

BISS (2019) Assessment Policy, BISS: Beijing, P.R.C.

BISS (2019) ESOL Handbook, BISS: Beijing, P.R.C.

BISS (2018) Elementary School Handbook, BISS: Beijing, P.R.C.

BISS (2014) SEN Handbook, BISS: Beijing, P.R.C.

BISS (2018) Secondary School Handbook, BISS: Beijing, P.R.C.

IB

IB (2008) Guidelines for Developing a School Language Policy, IB: Cardiff - U.K.

IB (2008) Towards a Continuum of International Education, IB: Cardiff - U.K.

IB (2009) IB Learner Profile Booklet, IB: Cardiff - U.K.

IB (2010) Programme Standards and Practices, IB: Cardiff - U.K.

IB (2011) Language and Learning in IB Programmes, IB: Cardiff - U.K.

IB (2011) Thought, Word and Deed: The Roles of Cognition, Language and Culture in Teaching and Learning in IB World Schools, IB: Cardiff - U.K.

IB (2012) Academic Honesty in the IB, IB: Cardiff - U.K.

IB (2012) Guidelines for School Self-reflection on its Language Policy, IB: Cardiff - U.K.

IB (2012) Language and Learning in IB Programmes, IB: Cardiff - U.K.

IB (2012) Learning in a Language other than Mother Tongue in IB Programmes, IB: Cardiff - U.K.

IB (2014) Programme Standards and Practices, IB: Cardiff - U.K.

PYP

IB (2008) Developing a Transdisciplinary Programme of Inquiry, IB: Cardiff - U.K.

IB (2009) Making the PYP happen – Pedagogical Leadership in a PYP School, IB: Cardiff

IB (2009) Language Scope and Sequence, IB: Cardiff - U.K.

IB (2010) The Primary Years Programme as a Model of Transdisciplinary Learning, IB: Cardiff - U.K.

IB (2011) The Role of I.C.T. in the PYP, IB: Cardiff - U.K.

Department of Education WA (2013) First Steps – Speaking and Listening Map of Development,
Department of Education WA: Perth - Australia

MYP

IB (2012) Concept-based Teaching and Learning, IB: Cardiff - U.K.

IB (2014) Fostering Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning in the MYP (Pre-publication), Cardiff
- U.K.

IB (2014) From Principles into Practice, IB: Cardiff - U.K.

IB (2014) Guide to Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning, IB: Cardiff - U.K.

IB (2014) Language & Literature Guide, IB: Cardiff - U.K.

IB (2014) Language Acquisition, IB: Cardiff - U.K.

IB (2014) MYP: From Principles into Practice, IB: Cardiff - U.K.

DP

IB (2008) Creativity, Action Service Guide, IB: Cardiff - U.K.

IB (2008) Creativity, Action, Service: Additional Guidance, IB: Cardiff - U.K.

IB (2011) Language B Guide - First Examinations 2015, IB: Cardiff - U.K.

IB (2012) Approaches to Teaching and Learning across the Diploma Programme, IB: Cardiff - U.K.

IB (2012) Extended Essay Guide - First Examinations 2013, IB: Cardiff - U.K.

IB (2012) Theory of Knowledge - First Examinations 2015 (Pre-Publication), IB: Cardiff - U.K.

IB (2014) Language A: Language & Literature Guide - First Examinations 2013, IB: Cardiff - U.K.

IB (2015) The Diploma Programme – From Principles to Practice, IB: Cardiff – U.K.