



LANGUAGE POLICY

School Vision

We develop future leaders with moral character, intellectual ability, international mindedness and deep compassion for humanity based upon Christian belief and values.

Guiding Statement for Policy

International Mindedness

To enhance the international mindedness of all members of the school community by promoting awareness of intercultural understanding and their role as global citizens.

ACS (International) Language Philosophy

The ACS (International) Language Philosophy is designed to promote high quality learning in an intercultural environment to develop students with intercultural understanding and their role as global citizens. This philosophy supports the school's vision and other policies, including the International Mindedness Policy and the IB Programme Standards and Practices (specifically IB PSP 0301-04).

The school serves both Singaporean and international students who are interested in an international curriculum within a Singaporean context. The international students, who represent more than 30 nationalities, contribute to the school's culture and help foster a sense of international mindedness within the community.

The school's language philosophy is built on several key principles that promote an inclusive, multilingual, and internationally minded learning environment. The principles are:

Language as a Foundation for Learning

- The school recognizes that language is crucial for shaping thought, developing understanding, and effective communication.
- All teachers, administrators, librarians, and other staff are responsible for supporting language development, reflecting the principle that "every teacher is a language teacher" for high quality teaching and learning. This commitment is integrated into the school's Teaching and Learning Framework and Unit Plans.
- The school also provides professional development for staff to ensure that this language policy is central to the entire school's practice.

English as the Medium of Instruction

- Given that English is the most widely used language in Singapore's schools, workplaces, and government agencies, it serves as the primary medium of instruction and communication.
- Students whose first language is not English are expected to develop proficiency in English to fully access the curriculum across all year levels, including foundational years, IGCSE/FIB/PIB, and the IBDP.
- The school provides programmes like the Bridging Programme and language support for English learners to ensure all students have equitable access to the full curriculum, regardless of their first language.

Promoting Multilingualism and Cultural Respect

- The school acknowledges Singapore's status as a multilingual country with four official languages: English, Malay, Chinese, and Tamil.

Prepared By	Approved By	Review and Revised	Reviewed by	Next Review
SLT	SLT	T4 2022 T3 2025	SLT /Academic Com	T3 2027

- The philosophy promotes international-mindedness and celebrates the cultural and linguistic diversity of the community. It recognizes and respects students' linguistic and cultural heritage as integral to their identity.
- The school also understands that mother tongues and other languages can be used to reinforce learning. To support this, the school provides opportunities for students to develop their first language, second language, or an official MOE mother tongue whenever possible. It also provides first language courses, either through classes or self-study, and acknowledges that non-English speakers undergo a distinct language learning process.

ACS (International) Language Profile

The student body at ACS (International) is diverse with approximately 50% of students holding Singaporean citizenship and 50% hailing from overseas. The school has 30+ nationalities on its roll reflecting a wide range of cultural identities, religious orientations, languages, values and beliefs. ACS (International) views intercultural learning and understanding as key to fostering a sense of community and family within its walls. Students at ACS (International) may use a variety of languages other than English when communicating with their peers.

The diverse staff body at ACS (International) reflects Singapore's multicultural make-up. In addition, a significant number of staff at ACS (International) come from overseas. ACS (International) values high levels of staff collaboration and interaction to nurture an effective, healthy and happy working environment. As such ACS (International) sees intercultural understanding as essential to maintaining high-quality teaching and learning throughout the school.

As a school that accepts Singaporean students, ACS (International) follows government legislation and MOE regulation regarding the Singaporean Mother-tongue programme.

For both students and staff multilingualism is an everyday reality at ACS (International). Celebrating and embracing other cultures through a recognition of linguistic diversity therefore underpins the ACS approach to languages.

Definition of Key Terms at ACS (International)

Language of Instruction: The language of instruction is the language used to teach content and conduct class. At ACS (International) the language of instruction is English except for Foreign language, mother-tongue, first language other than English classes.

Language of Communication: The language used to communicate within the school community (Announcement, staff briefings and meetings, minutes, brochure, assemblies, chapel services, parent information and parent teacher meetings). At ACS (International), the language of communication is English. The school does recognize that there might be a need to use other languages with parents or guardians who may not be proficient with English.

First Language: This is the language the student is most proficient in. Often but not always this will be the student's home language (The language first learnt by a student and most used).

Language acquisition and Second Language(s): Language(s) in which the student is 'less' proficient and has/have been acquired after the First Language. Ability and fluency may vary greatly with some students at beginner level (for example, starting a Spanish class in IGCSE, or Mandarin Ab initio) and other proficient users (For example a student taking IGCSE ESL or French B HL). Second language(s) proficiency may be measured using the Common European Framework for Languages (CEFR).

Mother-tongue: At ACS International, Mother-tongue is used to define languages studied in the Singapore MOE mother-tongue programme (Chinese, Tamil, and Malay).

English as the Medium of Instruction and Means of Communication

- English is the language of instruction at ACS (International) (except other language lessons e.g. Chinese).
- Students are expected to learn, process and express their learning in English.
- All teachers support ESL (English as a Second Language) learners and consider the language needs of all their students when planning. The school recognises that all teachers are language teachers.
- ESL and mainstream teachers collaborate regularly to ensure effective language support to their students, to provide inclusion and equity of access to curriculum.
- The use of English is positively reinforced as a tool that allows high quality education, interaction and collaboration within the ACS community. There is no punishment for students who fail to use English.
- Speakers of languages other than English may use dictionaries and other resources to aid their learning process.
- The school may communicate with parents or guardians in languages other than English if they are not proficient in English. Besides English, the school website provides general information in six other languages (for examples, Chinese, Korean, Indonesian). Whenever necessary and possible, the school has a staff member or regional office staff to assist in communicating with parents who are not proficient in English.

First Language other than English at ACS (International)

Students are encouraged to maintain and develop proficiency in the use of their first language:

- The School will assist the student in seeking instruction to develop their first language by liaising with outside agencies (e.g. BTTSAL 1) to ensure provision of the mother tongue ACS (International).
- The School offers IGCSE Chinese as First Language and O level Higher Chinese for students who are well versed in Chinese, so to students in Tamil and Malay, in O level Higher Mother Tongue. The school also allows students who wish to take their own First Language as First Language Examination should they wish to and when these are available.
- At IBDP level provision is made through Language A delivery. This may take the form of formal Language A delivery (Chinese A, Korean A, Japanese A). In addition, students may opt for school-supported self-taught languages (SSST). The school has an SSST support staff available and regularly trained (IB workshops).
- Whenever possible, classes are set up to help international students to continue in the development of their first language. For example, Year 3 and Year 4 students taking IGCSE ESL may opt for First Language Japanese or Korean classes (non-IGCSE).
- All staff and students at ACS (International) cultivate an awareness of their linguistic environment and aim, in formal and informal settings, to use the language that is the most inclusive so as not to exclude others.
- Students may draw upon their first language to reinforce academic concepts.
- In case of emergency the School will endeavour to use a student's first language or seek help from someone who speaks the student's first language.

Language Acquisition at ACS (International)

All students at ACS (International), except for students in Bridging, study a second language. For Singaporean students taking the MOE Mother-Tongue course, the mother-tongue language is studied in lieu of a language acquisition course up to Year 4. ACS (International) believes language acquisition is central to its language philosophy for the following reasons:

- We are an international school which encourages multilingualism as a means of improving communication and understanding within the community.
- Foreign language learning has been proven to enhance intercultural understanding and intercultural competences (Byram 2000).

The study of a foreign language equips students with a range of transferable skills that will enhance their learning experience.

- It is a required component of the IBDP.

All students study at a level that is appropriate to their needs and which challenges and develops their linguistic competence. Students may not study their first language as a language acquisition course.

Mother-Tongue Languages at ACS (International)

• Singaporean/Permanent Resident Students

Singaporean students and Singapore Permanent Residents must study their Mother Tongue language up to the required MOE level. Should a Singaporean student or Singapore Permanent Resident not wish to take their MT language but prefer to study a new language upon enrolment, they should understand that future application to a Singapore autonomous university would not be possible without an official exemption from the MOE. The Mother-tongue languages are Tamil, Mandarin, and Malay.

• Singaporean/ Permanent Resident Students with MOE Mother Tongue Language (MTL) Exemption

Such students need not study their MTL to the level required by MOE (Ministry of Education) for MTL. However, they all study a second or foreign language.

Their options are as follows:

1. They take up a new foreign language.
2. They can study a language at Beginner's course or IB Language B Ab initio when they have no prior experience of the language or no more than two years of formal instruction.

Non-Singaporean Students

Those students who are not Singaporean citizens or Singapore Permanent Residents (other than those following the Bridging programme) will:

Either

Continue with the study of a second language already started in a previous school.

or:

Begin a new, foreign language upon entry at ACS (International)

The Study of Language for the International Baccalaureate Diploma

All students will study language at an appropriate level to continue the educational process of linguistic development.

At the point of entry onto the IB Diploma Programme, the School will assess the student's language competence in first and second languages. It is the School's responsibility to place the student on the most suitable and appropriate language course.

Students will study Group 1 language in their strongest language. Any students with the ability to take two Group 1 languages may be considered on a case by case basis (based on the availability of resources).

Students having studied English as a Second Language at IGCSE may consider English Language courses in Group 1 or English B (HL) in Group 2. Acceptance onto the Group 1 course is dependent on their IGCSE English result (See Bridging Progression section). A diagnostic assessment may be conducted to ascertain the student's level of English.

All students in the IBDP must take a second language in Group 2 (language acquisition). Language B may be studied at HL, SL or Ab Initio. For students taking a language A other than English, it is a school requirement that they take Language B English HL.

Students whose First Language is offered in Group 2 are not eligible for the study of their language in Group 2. In cases where the School is unable to provide their language in Group 1, such students may study their First Language as School Supported Self-Taught (SSST) when it is offered as an assessed language for the Diploma.

Students may opt to study a new language at Ab Initio level if they have no prior experience of the language or no more than two years of formal instruction. Exceptions may apply to students who have been struggling with the language (i.e. failing for a few years) or have specific learning needs, they may have studied the language for a longer period. Singaporean and Permanent Resident students intending to apply to local autonomous universities must check that they have fulfilled all MTL entry requirements before opting for Ab Initio languages.

Due to its Singaporean context and MOE regulation regarding Mother-Tongue programmes, students taking Chinese B SL may opt for an anticipated examination as they are qualified to do so. All Singapore students must take an exam in one of the three national languages and by first year DP if they are well qualified to do so.

Parents and guardians are involved in guiding and vetting of their children's language choices at the point of entry into IBDP. The IBDP information sessions for prospective and new IBDP students included their parents and guardians. During these sessions, the various languages offered for IBDP and Singapore MOE policy on Mother Tongue Language requirements are presented. When necessary, parents and students consult with the Languages Faculty, especially the Head of Languages, and/or IB Coordinator regarding their IBDP language choices at the point of entry.

In all cases, the choice of an appropriate course of language study may only be made after appropriate consideration of the student's past language learning experience as well as their future educational and career plans. Students are strongly advised to discuss their IBDP subject choices, including language options, with their parents/guardians and the Higher Education department. Language subject choices will be vetted, and students will be provided with appropriate guidance at the point of entry onto the IBDP.

References

IB Documents:

- Programme Standards and Practices
- Guidelines for developing a school language policy
- Learning a language
- <https://ibo.org/programmes/diploma-programme/what-is-the-dp/learning-a-language/>

Singapore MOE:

- [Learning a Mother Tongue Language in school - Singapore](#)

ACS (International):

- Student Progression Policy
- Teaching and Learning Framework

Appendix

The list of Mother-tongue, First, Second and Ab initio languages currently offered from Y1 to Y6.

Year	Languages Subjects Offered
1	English English as a Second Language SEC G3 Higher Chinese SEC G3 Chinese SEC G2 Chinese SEC G1 Chinese SEC G3 Malay SEC G3 Tamil French as a Foreign Language Mandarin as a Foreign Language Spanish as a Foreign Language
2	English English as a Second Language SEC G3 Higher Chinese SEC G3 Chinese SEC G2 Chinese SEC G1 Chinese SEC G3 Malay SEC G3 Tamil French as a Foreign Language Mandarin as a Foreign Language Spanish as a Foreign Language
3	IGCSE First Language English IGCSE English as a Second Language O level Higher Chinese (1116) O level Express Chinese (1160) O level Express Malay (1148) O level Express Tamil (1157) O level Chinese Syllabus B (1153) IGCSE Chinese as a First Language (0509) IGCSE Chinese as a Second Language (0523) IGCSE French as a Foreign Language (0520) IGCSE Mandarin as a Foreign Language (0547) IGCSE Spanish as a Foreign Language (0530) Japanese Literature Korean Literature
4	IGCSE First Language English IGCSE English as a Second Language O level Higher Chinese (1116) O level Express Chinese (1160) O level Express Malay (1148) O level Express Tamil (1157) O level Chinese Syllabus B (1153) IGCSE Chinese as a First Language (0509) IGCSE Chinese as a Second Language (0523) IGCSE French as a Foreign Language (0520) IGCSE Mandarin as a Foreign Language (0547) IGCSE Spanish as a Foreign Language (0530) Japanese Literature Korean Literature

<p>5 Group 1</p>	<p>IB English Language and Literature HL IB English Language and Literature SL IB Chinese Language and Literature HL IB Chinese Language and Literature SL IB Japanese Literature HL IB Japanese Literature SL IB Korean Literature HL IB Korean Literature SL SSST</p>
<p>5 Group 2</p>	<p>IB English B HL IB Chinese B HL IB Chinese B SL IB French B HL IB French B SL IB Hindi B SL IB Malay B SL IB Spanish B SL IB Tamil B SL IB French ab initio SL IB Mandarin ab initio SL IB Spanish ab initio SL IB Japanese ab initio SL</p>
<p>6 Group 1</p>	<p>IB English Language and Literature HL IB English Language and Literature SL IB Chinese Language and Literature HL IB Chinese Language and Literature SL IB Japanese Literature HL IB Japanese Literature SL IB Korean Literature HL IB Korean Literature SL IB Japanese Literature HL IB Japanese Literature SL SSST</p>
<p>6 Group 2</p>	<p>IB English B HL IB Chinese B HL IB Chinese B SL IB French B HL IB French B SL IB Hindi B SL IB Spanish B SL IB Tamil B SL IB French ab initio SL IB Mandarin ab initio SL IB Spanish ab initio SL IB Japanese ab initio SL</p>