

Language Policy 2022/23

Philosophy

At St. Dominic's school, we believe that communication, both oral and written, is the key to educational progress, to social integration and to personal development and happiness. Language is both rich and diverse, constantly evolving, enabling us to express ideas, feelings, emotions and opinions. It informs and reflects the culture and society in which we live.

Language is fluid and constantly changing, and as such, we recognise that our language programme and outcomes should be regularly reviewed, assessed and modified in order to meet the ongoing needs of the students and the community. It underpins all areas of the curriculum, facilitating understanding and the acquisition of knowledge.

We want students to experience a wide range of both spoken and written English. Students with a learning support requirement and those with English as an Additional Language will be given support to enable them to access the curriculum. EAL students' expertise in their first language will also be valued and respected.

Purpose

- To develop our students' ability to communicate in and comprehend English and their other languages, whether these are home languages or newly acquired ones, and to equip them with the language skills necessary for academic success.
- To respect and promote every student's home language in the belief that all languages enrich intellectual and social growth.
- To value all languages and their cultural contexts and encourage all our students to become bilingual or multilingual.
- To encourage engagement with the language, history, culture and society of the host community of Lisbon and Portugal.
- To ensure language teaching and learning meet the needs of each individual student and build on their previous knowledge and skills.
- To consult with parents, students and teachers on entry and with continued monitoring, review language development on a regular basis.
- To provide a safe and positive language learning environment which is stimulating and well resourced.
- To instil in our teachers and students that language is best taught in authentic situations and to provide the resources and opportunities for this to happen.
- To integrate the language curriculum into all transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary subjects across the PYP, MYP and DP, recognising that language cannot be isolated and should be embedded in all subject areas.
- To enable students to grow in self-esteem and self-confidence through the learning of languages.

St. Dominic's International School, Portugal®

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- To recognise that ability to communicate effectively can come before grammatical accuracy, while ensuring that students have the opportunity to acquire and develop a thorough knowledge of the internal structures/workings of a language.
- To provide adequate resources in both Junior and Senior School and for all teachers and departments to support both discrete and cross-curricular language learning.

Language programmes

The school maintains the strict expectation that students will be engaged in language programmes that involve real challenge and intellectual development. Our language programmes consist of EAL, Language Acquisition and Language and Literature. Students will progress from one level to the next when they are proficient.

The school supports multilingualism and translanguaging.

All programmes are designed to give students the maximum range of options leading to the IB Diploma, taking starting levels into account.

Home Language

The school acknowledges the vital importance of maintenance and development of language and literacy skills in the student's home language. It recognizes that this development is important in acquiring a second language, thus contributing to additive bilingualism. At the same time, the school sees this as an opportunity to increase intercultural awareness and foster cultural understanding for both the students, peers, teachers and other members in the school community.

Where the school cannot offer direct instruction in a language, it will seek to support students and their families in home language maintenance, where possible, by such mechanisms as:

- Contact with embassies and other agencies which may be able to offer or promote support
- Recognise and support learning in community language centres
- Facilitate home language classes within the school premises
- Developing library resources in a range of languages used by students.
- Promote opportunities to celebrate the various home languages and cultural traditions, within the school
- Make available guides and other documents necessary to align (when appropriate) the home language curriculum with the International Baccalaureate

Management in these matters is part of the responsibilities of the Heads of Languages.

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Host Country Language

From grade 1 up and including grade 8, the school has a commitment to embrace teaching Portuguese Language and Culture to all students. Portuguese Culture is taught not only through Portuguese Language lessons, but also in other subjects. Host country's traditions and celebrations are supported by the school community.

This document will be reviewed and revised by June 2025.

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