

Language Policy

- DRAFT -

1. PHILOSOPHY

- 1.1. As an IB World School, and as a member of the Global Network of RSHM Schools, Marymount International School London recognises that language is integral to “the education of the whole person”, promoting personal and intellectual growth through exploration of cultural identity (aided by the study of at least two languages) within a context of active and deepening intercultural understanding.
- 1.2. The School’s curricular practices are designed to implement fully the RSHM and IBO mission statements, in accordance with the principles enshrined both in its own published educational philosophy and objectives, and in IB documentation governing delivery of the Middle Years Programme (MYP, Grades 6-10) and the Diploma Programme (DP, Grades 11- 12). In relation to language-acquisition, linguistic development and literary understanding, these practices are rooted in an awareness that, as well as being the main medium of social communication, language-skills are tightly linked to cognitive growth, since they are the means by which meaning and knowledge are negotiated, constructed and shared.
- 1.3. In recognising that language is central to learning, the School acknowledges that all teachers are, in practice, language-teachers, with responsibilities in facilitating communication. In addition, the School believes that it is essential for all to have a strong foundation in one’s own language (mother tongue), and therefore encourages and supports this development, wherever possible, through an ethos of acceptance and celebration of linguistic diversity within a genuinely international community.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1. In Languages A (Literature & Language and Literature), the emphasis is on the study of literary and (where relevant or appropriate) non-literary texts and on the development of mature powers of appreciation and analysis, as well as the ability to convey these effectively in speech and writing. Other forms of writing – creative, expository – are fostered and assigned, as integral elements in a balanced Language Arts curriculum, complementing studies in the main literary genres. As well as becoming acquainted with a range of major authors, which covers different epochs and (where applicable) the various countries where that language is spoken, students in each Language A are required to read works of World Literature in Translation, to develop international-mindedness through comparative literary studies.
- 2.2. In Languages B/ab initio, the emphasis is on transactional linguistic competence and cultural studies. In both cases, curricula are sequentially designed (so that a student enrolled in Grade 6 – and continuing till she graduates in Grade 12 – will experience a comprehensive introduction to the field) but semestrally structured (so that a student who stays for only one semester – as not infrequently happens in mobile international families – will enjoy a balanced and transferable programme).

- 2.3. All students participating in either the MYP (Grades 6–10) or the DP (Grades 11–12) are required to study at least two languages: a Language A and one other language (either a second Language A or a Language B). Exceptions to this policy are made for ESL students and/or those students who require additional English support. Such students will be required to take a specially designed ESL course and, if deemed appropriate, to audit English A classes until such time as their English proficiency allows them to access the whole curriculum in a meaningful way. Language-combinations are arranged according to the needs of the student and the availability of language-teachers in the target languages. [See further, #3 below.]

3. LANGUAGE-PROVISION

3.1. English

As the School's Language of Instruction and the language of the host country, all students are required to take courses each year in English, either as Language A (mother-tongue speakers and functional bilinguals) or Language B (second language). [Details in #7, below.] Students who, on entering the School, have limited competence in English are given additional initial language-support (schedule permitting) to enable them to learn effectively and confidently in their other subjects as soon as possible*. Faculty are provided with opportunities to learn about language-learning and language-teaching as part of the School's CPD; classroom teachers are, thus, aware of ESL students' needs, and modify or differentiate lessons accordingly. In this way students are enabled to achieve competency in meeting academic goals, and to participate fully in the School culture, thereby becoming integrated members of the Marymount community.

[*In very exceptional cases, ESL support of a more intensive nature may be needed; if this entails, as a condition of admission, short-term outside tuition to supplement the School's provision, parents will be notified in advance (and informed that any such arrangement will be subject to an additional cost, to be agreed between them and a tutor, whether hired privately or through the School).]

3.2. Mother-tongue instruction or support in other First Languages (Languages A)

The School actively seeks to support the mother-tongue development of its students, and in fulfilment of this commitment is able to offer scheduled Language A courses in a number of languages other than English. Depending on numbers, and schedules permitting, Language A* instruction in Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Korean and Spanish is available for students in Grades 9–12. Wherever possible, mother-tongue support is offered in these languages to students in Grades 6–8, depending on demand and teacher availability.

[*In the DP, other Languages A may be pursued with an outside tutor (subject to an additional fee to be agreed between parents and tutor by private arrangement), but these studies are supervised by the School's Chair of Modern Languages and/or programme coordinator. At DP Standard Level only, an alternative option is available: School-supported Self-taught Language A, supervised as outlined above.]

3.3. Second Languages

- 3.3.1 All students (except, temporarily, those acquiring minimum functional competence in English B) are required to take a second language. As well as the obvious practical benefits, the intrinsic value of studying a language other than one's mother-tongue is that doing so enables a student to discover another culture at first hand, and so acquire another "window on the world".

- 3.3.2 For MYP English A students, this second language will normally be French B or Spanish B. But students who are bilingual, or nearly so, may – instead of a Language B – opt for a second Language A, in languages where the School has mother-tongue teachers on its staff (currently: Chinese, Korean, French, German, Japanese, Spanish) or, when numbers warrant, employs a part-time tutor on a yearly basis. In MYP Languages A other than English, students of different grades (spanning usually Grades 9– 10, exceptionally Grades 8–10) may be grouped in one class in order to constitute a viable teaching- group.
- 3.3.3 MYP students in English B may, timetable permitting, also opt for French B or Spanish B as their second language (this is particularly the case in the Middle School: Grades 6–8) rather than mother-tongue instruction; in such cases, mother-tongue support is provided where possible (as outlined in 2 above), to encourage maintenance of their cultural identity within an intercultural atmosphere. Instruction in other Languages B where the School employs teachers [viz., the languages listed in 3.3.2 above for Language A] is provided in the DP only. MYP students of French B or Spanish B are grouped according to age and lessons are differentiated according to needs of the students and level: i.e., class-groupings by level (from 1 to 5) may span more than one grade (e.g.: Gr. 6–8 or Gr. 9– 10). Occasionally, a student proficient by Gr.8 in one language B may opt to switch to another so as to broaden her linguistic horizons.
- 3.3.4 MYP students enrolled in a Language A other than English (typically in the first cycle of High School: Grades 9–10) where instruction is offered in School may take either English A or English B as their second language. Any student wishing to take a third language is encouraged to do so where teachers are available and timetabling permits.

4. ESL PROVISION WITHIN THE MYP

- 4.1. Students entering Marymount London with limited proficiency in English receive appropriate additional support within the curriculum. Non-native speakers are assisted in reaching proficiency in English through a five-level ESL programme in Grades 6–10 (MYP). The levels offered are Beginner (open to Grades 6–8), Pre-Intermediate (open to Grades 6–7), Intermediate and Upper-Intermediate (open to Grades 9–10), Advanced (open to Grade 10). The Beginner (Eng. B1), Pre-Intermediate (Eng. B2) and Intermediate (Eng. B3) levels receive English provision of 8 periods per 10-day cycle provided by a qualified ESL/English B teacher. Upper-Intermediate (Eng. B4) and Advanced (Eng. B5) also receive 8 periods per cycle, again provided by a qualified ESL/English B teacher. [See also grid-diagram in Appendix (#7) below.]
- 4.2. ESL students follow a full programme in all required subjects. [Exception: by being temporarily withdrawn from pursuing other language-options, students in Eng. B1 and Eng. B2 are enabled to concentrate on achieving as soon as possible the level of functional competence in English needed to facilitate satisfactory learning in their “non-language” subjects, which are all taught through the medium of English.]
- 4.3. When a student is in transition from ESL/Eng. B to English A, she may – for a limited period – take both ESL and English A courses. During this transitional period, she may be dispensed from pursuing other language-options.
- 4.4. Teachers within the ESL Department monitor the progress of ESL/English B students on a weekly basis, principally through English B meetings and through conversations with other subject teachers. Students transition from English B to English A on a flexible and reactive basis at any point in the academic year and always in conjunction with the students themselves, their parents and their teachers.

5. LANGUAGE-TEACHING

- 5.1. All languages (MYP Languages A and B; DP Languages A, B and ab initio) are taught by qualified native speakers, with the obvious exception of Latin (mandatory in Grades 6, 7 & 8 and available on special request in Grades 9 & 10).
- 5.2. Language plays a key role in interdisciplinary learning, and the School's various departments of languages (English A; ESL/English B; Modern Languages) are ideally placed to play an active part in developing, designing and discovering valid cross-curricular links aimed at empowering students' intellectual growth.

6. RESOURCES

- 6.1. The teaching of languages is supported by a wide range of audio-visual resources and the Library's print holdings and online facilities. Instructional methods are enhanced by the deployment of appropriate and effective ICT resources. Student-led assemblies provide regular opportunities for all students to become confident communicators to a large audience. Participation in drama productions allow them to experience fully the expressive beauty and power of language skilfully used. Events such as International Day allow them to share their cultural riches with their peers. In these and other ways students come to appreciate the vital role of language as the major vehicle for thought and expression in their everyday lived reality.

7. APPENDIX:

MINIMUM ENGLISH PROFICIENCY LEVELS FOR ADMISSION

	MMI COURSE	CEFR ⁵	IELTS ⁶	TOEFL ⁷	CAMBRIDGE ESOL
Grade 6	ENG B1 MYP Phase 1	A1 +	-	-	-
Grade 7	ENG B2 MYP Phase 2	A1/2 +	0-4 +	-	KET ¹ +
Grade 8	ENG B3 MYP Phase 3	A1/2 +	0-4 +	-	KET ¹ +
Grade 9	ENG B4 MYP Phase 4	A2 +	4 +	-	KET ¹ +
Grade 10	ENG B5 MYP Phase 5	A2 +	4 +	-	KET ¹ +
Grade 11	DP ENG B SL Year 1	B1 +	4.5-5 +	57-86 +	PET ² +
	DP ENG B HL Year 1	B2 +	5.5-6.5 +	87-109 +	FCE ³ +
	DP ENG A Lang & Lit SL Year 1	B2 +	5.5-6.5 +	87-109 +	FCE ³ +
	DP ENG A Lang & Lit HL Year 1	C1 +	7 +	110 +	CAE ⁴ +
	DP ENG A Lit SL/HL Year 1	C1 +	7 +	110 +	CAE ⁴ +
Grade 12	DP ENG B SL/HL Year 2	B2 +	5.5-6.5 +	87-109 +	FCE ³ +
	DP ENG A Lang & Lit SL Year 2	B2 +	5.5-6.5 +	87-109 +	FCE ³ +
	DP ENG A Lang & Lit HL Year 2	C1 +	7 +	110 +	CAE ⁴ +
	DP ENG A LIT Year 1	C1 +	7 +	110 +	CAE ⁴ +

¹ Cambridge Key English Test² Cambridge Preliminary English Test³ Cambridge First Certificate in English⁴ Cambridge Certificate in Advanced English⁵ Common European Framework of Reference for Languages⁶ International English Language Testing System⁷ Test of English as a Foreign Language