

Language Policy

BISU is an international school in Kiev, Ukraine, which offers the IB PYP in the primary school, the National Curriculum for England in the secondary school (Key Stage 3) leading to the taking of IGCSEs (Key Stage 4). In the senior school the IB Diploma Programme is offered at the Pechersk campus.

BISU believes that all teachers are language teachers. It is important that the school provides language programmes that meet the needs of the students, many of whom are not mother tongue speakers of the English language. The development of English as an Additional Language (EAL) programmes must be clearly laid out in order for the teachers, students and administration to understand what the expectations of the programme are for both for students and teachers. The purpose of this document is to establish BISU's philosophy and objectives of language programmes for the school.

What is a language policy?

The school believes that language is at the core of human experience. The school recognises that students from non-English speaking backgrounds enter our school with proficiency in their mother tongue, valuable life experiences, and varying degrees of formal schooling but without full proficiency of the English Language in its written and oral forms. The school's mission is to assist these students to acquire or to improve their written and oral communication skills in English. The aim is to enable new students to become independent and confident listeners, speakers, readers, and writers in the English language, to become full participants in the academic programmes of the school, and to integrate quickly in all school activities.

As an international school, we promote cross-cultural and multilingual integration in our approach to language teaching and learning in that we recognise the importance of learning additional languages.

Objectives:

The language policy and programmes at BISU aim to adhere to the IB prescribed elements of language instruction and practice as we:

- establish and promote inquiry-based learning of language at the various year levels;
- understand and encourage the transdisciplinary nature of language by promoting collaboration across year levels and content areas;
- use the POI as an authentic context for learners to use language. Wherever possible, language should be taught through the relevant, authentic context of the units of inquiry;
- implement an intentional integration of teaching and learning of language into the core curricular goals;
- develop programmes that promote teaching and learning of language skills, including reading, writing, speaking and listening;
- develop and implement programmes into the core curricular objectives

- literacy skills that integrate media literacy;
- provide learning opportunities for mother tongue support within the core curricular objectives;
- establish and promote a uniform practice of instruction as prescribed in *Language Scope and Sequence*.

Language of Instruction

The primary medium of instruction is English, keeping in mind the following:

- the importance of English as a universal language in education and in international relations;
- supplemental English language support must be in place (i.e., EAL and Literacy) to augment the curricular objectives in core content areas for English Language Learners (ELLS);
- the understanding of the value added to instruction and learning of English by providing near or perfect immersion classroom settings;
- the essential need for the development of skills in English language as pertaining to the four skills of language acquisition: reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Mother Tongue Support

BISU schools have a special responsibility to recognise and support language development to ensure that all students are provided with the environment and the necessary language support to enable them to participate fully in the academic programme and in the social life of the school, as well as to develop as individuals. The goal of mother tongue support is to establish programs that provide opportunities to develop both social and academic learning in the student's mother tongue.

At BISU we recognize the connection between second language learning and their mother tongue. For this reason students are allowed and encouraged to use their mother tongue to access the curriculum, if needed. At the Primary level, every classroom has a trilingual Assistant Teacher who speaks English, Russian and Ukrainian. If students in the class do not understand the curriculum being taught they are encouraged to discuss their understanding with the Assistant Teacher or their classmates using their mother tongue.

To maintain the development of the mother tongue language of the majority of our students, Ukrainian language is offered as a part of our Ukrainian Programme in the Primary school. Ukrainian Literature is also offered at group 1 option for the Diploma programme. BISU is the only school in Ukraine which offers the study of Ukrainian literature at this level and believes that it is incredibly important to do so given the current political situation.

Additionally, Russian is widely spoken by our student body so the school provides Russian Language Club after school. Russian language is also offered as a group 2

subject in the Diploma programme.

Mother tongue support for language other than Ukrainian or Russian will be provided upon request and once the number of students needing this support has reached a minimum amount of 5 pupils. BISU annually reviews the Mother Tongue language support needs of its students and updates its programmes accordingly.

Host Country Language

At BISU, all Primary students have one Ukrainian Language and Culture session per week. These lessons are 45 minutes in length and are taught by the Teaching Assistants who differentiate according to student's knowledge of the language and understanding of the culture. The Host Country Language Program is coordinated by the Host Country Language Coordinator who meets regularly with the Program Coordinator to ensure the program follows this policy.

In both primary and secondary school students have the option of studying a fully international programme or a dual curriculum in which they study some lessons in Ukrainian.

Additional Language

Competence in more than one language/s will enable students to examine their own and others' experiences, feelings and ideas, giving them order and meaning. It assists them to learn about themselves and their own and others' cultures, to communicate their thoughts and feelings, to participate in society, to make informed decisions about personal and social issues and to discover and use their analytical and imaginative capacities. BISU offers a choice of French, German and Russian as an additional language for students from Year 5 onwards. Additionally, French will be offered in addition to Russian as a group 2 language option for Diploma programme students.

IB Learner Profile for Language

The IB learner profile is integral to teaching and learning language in the PYP and Diploma programme because it represents the qualities of effective learners and internationally minded students. We also recognise this as an aid to all language learning throughout all areas of the school. The learner profile, together with the five essential elements of the programme—knowledge, concepts, skills, attitudes and action—informs planning, teaching and assessing in language. Our students strive to be:

Inquirers: They inquire into language use and language structures. They use language to acquire information and to make sense of the world around them.

Thinkers: They are able to express their thoughts and ideas clearly.

Communicators: They are competent users of oral and written language. They listen attentively and pay attention to detail. They speak confidently and clearly. They read fluently with good comprehension. They write clearly, concisely, and accurately in a style appropriate for the purpose.

Risk takers: They are willing to attempt to read, write or speak in situations where

they may not feel totally confident.

Knowledgeable: They have acquired the vocabulary and understanding to discuss language structures, text forms and literary styles.

Principled: They are aware that language is powerful and it can have a profound effect and it must therefore be used responsibly.

Caring: They show care in their use of language and are aware of how the use of language can affect others.

Open minded: They respect differences and similarities between languages, dialects and personal communication styles. They understand that language can be used as an expression of bias.

Balanced: They can express themselves orally as well as in writing and find a balance between listening and speaking in communicating with others. They read a variety of written material and are able to write for different purposes and audiences.

Reflective: They reflect on their language development and consciously work at improving their language proficiency.

Admissions Policy

At BISU, the main language of instruction is English. In the primary school, language proficiency in the language of instruction (English) is not a prerequisite. Where needed, support will be provided by the class teacher and teaching assistant, through differentiated activities, and in some cases, the school and parents may work together to develop strategies or obtain resources to help the student gain initial confidence and develop a simple framework for communication. In the secondary school, students are required to sit a language exam. A decision will be taken on their admittance based on their ability to follow the curriculums taught and the level of support the school can provided.

A whole School Policy for the teaching of EAL

Aims and Objectives:

- To raise the profile of EAL in BISU.
- To highlight the wider opportunities available to all students of ESL including those who take the Atestat and go to university in Ukraine.
- To include EAL in professional development of subject teachers.
- To assist all staff in becoming proficient in the use of English.

Whole School Policy

EAL is conceptualised as an aspect of general teaching rather than a special teaching area. For that reason, it will be the policy to teach EAL students within the mainstream classes rather than withdrawing them. The implementation of EAL is the responsibility of all teachers in the school. All teachers should build in and reinforce EAL in their lessons. EAL teachers' responsibilities should be negotiated as good professional practice within their working context and the framework of the following descriptors.

Teaching and learning of EAL students

The EAL Coordinator will coordinate the EAL support in the school. EAL teachers will draw upon their knowledge and understanding of:

- Knowledge about and ways of describing spoken and written English language in use, such as phonology, lexis, grammar, syntax, morphology and discourse.
- The role of spoken and written language across the curriculum, including the conceptual, linguistic and cultural content of the school curriculum
- Theories of second language learning and development, including the relationship to first language development, bilingualism and cognition
- Appropriate contexts for EAL and bilingual support which takes into account classroom learners' variables
- The relevance of students' first language and culture on students' learning.

Evidence of desirable planning and practice may include:

Analysis of the language demands, needs and opportunities of the curriculum content

The integration of academic language and content teaching matched with ESL students' needs

The employment of teaching approaches which take account of differing learning contexts, curriculum demands and lesson variables in order to meet the language learning needs and progression of EAL students at different stages.

Teachers should employ strategies to make the learning environment as supportive as possible for language development, using techniques which enable students to use and build upon existing knowledge and skills, using pictures, diagrams and objects, opportunities to learn from others and planned opportunities for speaking and listening.

Assessment and Monitoring

Sound and consistent assessment practices based on a range of strong and purposeful range of teaching and learning strategies is important. EAL students' progress should be included in school assessment and reporting interpretation of results. Liaison with other subject teachers is important in order to assess students in other areas of the curriculum.

Assessment:

There should be formative and summative assessment of spoken and written English which recognises the distinctive learning contexts and pathways for EAL progress and recognises students' differing levels of English and progress in EAL.



Assessment procedures are specified in the assessment and procedure handbook.