

ZIS Diploma Programme Language Policy

Our Mission and Philosophy

At ZIS we strive to develop dynamic and principled global citizens who have the skills and attitudes to enable them to become compassionate life-long learners who will contribute positively to the future of our world.

The Zhuhai International School (ZIS) has been educating young people from across the globe in a caring and inspirational environment since 2007. Working with students from the age of 3 to 18, we have around 30 different nationalities exploring challenging aspects of the world around us and experiencing the joys and rewards of inquiry-based concept learning.

As an IB World School, ZIS is uniquely placed to promote new perspectives and broaden the minds of the children in our care, and deepen their sense of understanding and wonder. ZIS prizes communication, holistic learning and intercultural awareness and is the perfect place for truly international families who are bringing up their children to be global citizens. ZIS students are a unique blend of nationalities, cultures and ethnicities, all eager to contribute actively and compassionately to the life of our school and the wider community around us.

ZIS students strive to do the right thing, even when they may be the only ones who will notice. Whether our students are with us for a year or two, or stay through to graduation and move on to the university of their dreams, we want our young people to look back on ZIS as a time when their desire to learn was awakened and they began to realize they have the power to change the lives of others and make a difference in our world.

This Policy

This document explains the different dimensions of ZIS's Diploma Programme Language Policy. At ZIS, English is the primary language of instruction and communication. However, given our host country, staff and student language profiles and course offerings, Chinese Mandarin is a close second. The purpose of this Language Policy is to:

- detail the framework in which ZIS meets the language needs of its diverse learners;
- explain the IB Language A and B requirements for the Diploma Programme;
- describe the language support ZIS provides to all DP candidates to help them to succeed
- reflect our mission of internationalism, interculturalism and support for cultural diversity

It includes the specific English language options, requirements, and assessments for students enrolling in the ZIS IB Diploma Programme, and the means by which we support learning in students' second and mother-tongue languages.



Our Approach to Language

At Zhuhai International School, we believe that enrichment through language offers our students the necessary communication tools and capacities essential to quality academic work and active global citizenship. We accept and encourage diverse languages, and believe that learning languages in addition to one's mother tongue fosters intercultural awareness and empathy. This approach also supports the practical needs of the globally mobile in our community.

At ZIS it is understood that:

- Language is a primary means of communicating and learning.
- The acquisition of language is a life-long process and is a central component of intellectual and personal growth.
- Proficiency earned in one language is transferable to other languages, and language proficiency aids the student in acquiring competencies in other curricular areas.
- Language is an expression of culture and must be valued as an integral part of a student's identity.
- The development of the mother-tongue language is critical for maintaining one's cultural identity.
- Language learning promotes internationalism and multicultural understanding.
- Language learning must be fostered in all aspects of the school community.
- All teachers are language teachers.
- Teachers must strive to recognize the language needs of all students and work to serve these needs within and outside of the classroom.
- Equity of access to IB courses is a fundamental right of all qualified students.

Aims

At ZIS, our language programs aim to:

- Develop students' abilities to communicate effectively in oral and written forms in diverse contexts, and for diverse purposes.
- Enable students to learn and use language effectively, appropriately, accurately, and confidently.
- Develop students' powers of oral and written communication.
- Enable students to develop and use language skills in a variety of contexts and purposes.
- Promote the appreciation, understanding, and analysis of literature.
- Encourage students to explore language as a means to understand the differing perspectives of people from other cultures.
- Develop students' awareness of the role of language, and enable them to understand and effectively use vocabulary and communication styles in other areas of the curriculum and in relation to other ways of knowing.
- Appreciate language as a source of identity, culture, and worldview for the students themselves, and for world's diverse peoples.
- To provide an opportunity for enjoyment, creativity, and intellectual stimulation through knowledge of language and literature



ZIS Language Profile

The general language profiles of ZIS MYP students include:

- English-only background students with little or no Language B exposure;
- Bilingual students with non-English speaking parents who have acquired English through instruction at school;
- Students with limited English proficiency and non-English speaking parents who are currently learning English at school;
- Bilingual students who have acquired both English and another language since birth.

As of March 2013, English is the mother tongue of 31% of the students currently enrolled in MYP. Chinese Mandarin is the mother tongue of 26% of students, and Japanese 13%. Around 70% of secondary students at ZIS are proficient in English, enabling them to select Language A English.

ZIS MYP Language Profile as of March 2013. (Total Number of students 61)						
Language	Mother Tongue: Total Number of Students	Mother Tongue by %	Total students who speak/read/write each language proficiently (Suitable as Language A selection)	Total students who speak/read/write each language proficiently, as %	Two Language B (no Language A), by %	Both Language A English and Chinese, by %
English	19	31	42	69	8	15
Chinese Mandarin	16	26	21	34		
Chinese Cantonese	3	5				
Korean	3	5	2			
Japanese	8	13	8			
French	3	5				
German	4	7				
Russian	1	3				
Danish	2	2				
Spanish	1	3				
Italian	1	2				



Although English is the language of instruction, currently (March 2013) there are no native-speakers enrolled in the DP for the next academic year:

ZIS DP Language Profile as of March 2013 (Based on current enrolments)						
Language	Mother Tongue: Total Number of Students	Mother Tongue by %	Total students who speak/read/write each language proficiently (Suitable as Language A selection)	Total students who speak/read/write each language proficiently, as %	Two Language B (no Language A), by %	Both Language A English and Chinese, by %
Chinese Mandarin	2	40	3	60	0	0
Chinese Cantonese	1	20	0			
Danish	1	20	0			
Spanish	1	20	0			
English	0	0	2	40		

ZIS Diploma Programme Language Offerings

Group 1: Language A

For the incoming cohort for 2013-14, ZIS offers **English A1: Language and Literature**, **Mandarin A1: Language and Literature** at standard and higher levels, and **School-supported Self-taught language** at standard level. Depending on the size and needs of the student group, Standard and Higher levels may be offered separately, or within the same class.

Why Language & Literature?

This course provides both native and non-native speakers of English with a repertoire of strategies they can use to read any text sensitively -- anywhere, anytime. While the syllabus includes the study of literature, it spends equal time on a range of other texts -- including oral, print, and media texts. In addition to honing students' reading and writing skills, the course challenges students to become strong speakers, listeners, viewers, and representers. The critical thinking skills and reading strategies integral to the course invite students to assume complexity, and to experience its rewards. Students can then transfer these understandings and skills to the intercultural relationships they have with other people -- the most complex "texts" of all. As perceptive and appreciative decoders and encoders of culturally diverse oral, print, and media texts, they can become dynamic citizens capable of advancing the IB Mission Statement in their communities.



Bilingual Diploma

Appropriate students are encouraged to take two Group 1 languages, and be eligible for a Bilingual Diploma. This pathway is particularly relevant to students who have completed most or all of our MYP.

School-supported Self-taught

This option is appropriate for particular students, and its approval by the DP Coordinator will be based on:

- the student's mother tongue;
- academic pathway counseling with the student and their family;
- the student's academic ability and history with the language;
- the availability and suitability of a supporting external tutor;
- the scheduling of timetabled in-school support;
- the availability and accessibility of supporting resources within China.

Candidates undertaking a Bilingual Diploma and/or School-support Self-taught will undergo the appropriate counseling as described in the Diploma Handbook sections A1.6 and B1a.4.6, and B1a.6 respectively.

Group 2: Language B

All students* in the Diploma Programme are required to take a Language B. For Chinese students enrolled in Language A Mandarin, Language B English is offered. For English students enrolled in Language A English, Language B Mandarin or Mandarin Ab initio is offered, as is Spanish Ab initio via Pamoja Education**. Excepting Spanish Ab initio, these are also the offerings available in the MYP.

*excepting students who take two Group 1 subjects

**learning through Pamoja is not necessarily suitable to all students' learning styles and strengths. Also, as Economics in Group 3 is also offered using Pamoja, enrolment in Spanish Ab initio requires counseling and approval from the DP Coordinator.

Language Pathways at ZIS – MYP to DP

MYP	DP Subject	DP Group
English A Mandarin A	English A: Language & Literature – SL / HL Mandarin A: Language & Literature – SL / HL	Group 1
English B Mandarin B	English B – SL / HL Mandarin B – SL / HL Mandarin Ab initio Spanish Ab initio	Group 2



Language Requirements for Diploma Programme Admission

At the Diploma level, students must meet adequate standards of fluency. Candidates must be able to mentally decode and understand the level and complexity of language they will hear and read in their DP courses.

In terms of language proficiency, the **DP Admissions Policy** states that all admissions must be approved by the DP Admissions Panel. The guiding framework they will use to evaluate language proficiency is as follows:

- Existing students who have completed 5 years of the ZIS MYP will be adequately prepared for a Group 1 and Group 2 subject, or two Group 1 subjects.
- Existing students who have not completed the full 5 year-MYP here at ZIS, and may perhaps have only been with us a year, will have their English proficiency appraised as follows:
 - Language Pathway 1 students – direct entry
 - Language Pathway 2 and 3 students – most recent ZIS English Language Proficiency test, MYP report, teacher evaluation
- Students who are new enrolments to the school will have their English proficiency appraised. This will be based upon TOEFL, IELTS and/or the ZIS English Proficiency test, an interview, and may also involve academic testing:
 - TOEFL scores: A minimum grade of 70 (for the internet test), with consistency across the 4 tests of Reading, Listening, Speaking, Writing.
 - IELTS scores: A minimum Overall Band Score of 5.0, with consistency across the 4 tests of General /Academic Reading, Listening, Speaking, Writing.
 - ZIS English Language Proficiency Test: A minimum score of 7, with consistency across the 4 tests of Reading, Listening, Speaking, Writing.
 - *Interview*: The interview assesses the student’s ability to listen, think, and speak in English. (Students who must translate back and forth between English and their native language may struggle with DP courses.)
 - *Academic test*: This task assesses the candidate’s reading, thinking, organizational, and writing skills.

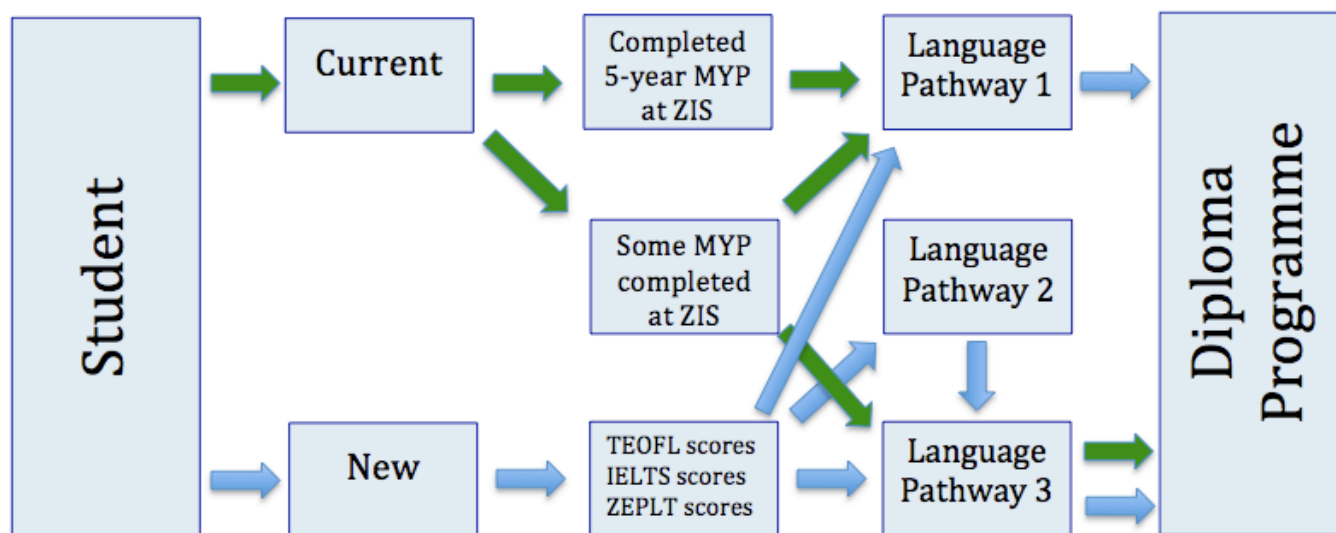
Note that students entering the DP with these minimums will need ongoing EAL support.

New students, or those that have not been at ZIS for the entire MYP, may not be ready linguistically for the full Diploma. These students will be counselled on a case-by-case basis. Pathways at ZIS for them could include:

- Entering the Diploma as a Courses candidate (per subject)
- Language Pathway 2 or 3 (See Language Policy)



Language of Instruction (English) Pathways to Diploma Programme Admission



**graphic needs updating – to be Broughtoned*

Support for Language Development in the DP

First and foremost, all teachers in the ZIS Diploma Programme are language teachers. Reading and writing skills, generally and specific to the subject area, are developed in each IB course through a wide variety of formative and summative assessments. While the language of instruction at ZIS is English, as outlined earlier, ZIS is home to learners who speak many different languages in their home environments. Students in the small cohort of Secondary school at ZIS speak 10 different languages in their homes. Our Diploma Programme Language Profile shows:

- 60% of our IB Diploma Programme students primarily speak a Chinese language in their homes.
- 40% of our IB Diploma Programme students primarily speak a language other than Chinese or English in their homes.
- No students currently enrolled for this coming year primarily speak English in their homes.

Our DP staff recognizes the importance of our students successfully employing a variety of language paradigms as they engage in their education. In addition to strengthening their English skills, students must learn and effectively utilize the language of the International Baccalaureate Standards, Practices and Assessment Descriptors. For the majority of our students, this involves knowing when and how to shift between various languages including home languages, and disciplinary literacies within and among their many academic classes.

All students benefit from the assistance of language development found in their academic courses as aided by their content instructors. Language development support can be found in each classroom.

Formative assessments are designed not only to assess the acquisition of content knowledge and skills, but also to engage students in regular use of Standard Academic English as well as the language of the content and the IB descriptors relevant to the discipline studied. The instruction, reflection and

assessment of content knowledge and skills lead to summative assessments that are regularly reviewed with alignment to the language of instruction and the language of the IB standards, practices and assessment descriptors.

To further aid our diverse student population in engaging and achieving in the DP, we offer a range of supports to our students and their families.

Mother Tongue Support

At ZIS, Mother Tongue is encouraged and acknowledged in the classroom. At times, students are encouraged to “think in their own language” to more deeply internalize or flexibly apply a concept. Mother-tongue is supported in the DP subject offerings of English, Mandarin, and the School-supported Self-taught option.

Other ZIS Supports for Mother Tongue:

- Parents are provided with contact details of language support networks available in the Zhuhai community.
- Mother tongue groups may use the school facilities to run mother-tongue lessons after school hours.
- The secondary library includes a variety of texts in different languages.
- Mother tongue sessions may be incorporated into the DP timetable.

Many staff members are fluent in students’ mother tongues, and serve as resources to facilitate home-school communication.

English Language Support for Students

Our ESL/ELL instructors avail themselves to our staff on a regular basis to support English language development from a variety of perspectives including but not limited to:

- English language skill assessment and consultation for appropriate course placement;
- Professional development facilitation to strengthen instructional strategies used by mainstream teachers in differentiating instruction for our English Language Learning students;
- Curriculum support and development to engage our English Language Learning students.

All DP teachers commit to providing regular after-school tutorial sessions in which students are able to get one-to-one or small group support in meeting the course expectations.

Care is taken to ensure that, to the degree possible, scheduled tutorials in one content area do not conflict with scheduled tutorials in another. Moreover, many teachers make themselves available through other means to assist students in their educational experience.

We provide EAL support classes within the student timetable to provide support to struggling readers and writers. These classes strengthen students’ English language skills to support increased success in challenging coursework, standardized assessments (such as required graduation examinations), and their future post-secondary studies.



From next year our school will engage all members of our learning community in 'DEAR time' (Drop Everything And Read, also known as Silent Sustained Reading) for twenty minutes a day, four days a week. This allotment of time for SSR reaps multiple benefits for our students including:

- improved reading, comprehension and critical thinking skills;
- modeling of reading strategies by school staff and student leaders;
- opportunities for reading for pleasure within the school day;
- and critical discussions of popular texts found in our library.

Our Language B instructors use a variety of strategies known to increase language acquisition including:

- the incorporation of cultural competencies and understandings in the language of study;
- opportunities for language immersion experiences both through local language/culture programs as well as travel abroad options;
- and working in partnership with feeder schools and local organizations to highlight the studied language and culture within the wider community.

Communication with Non-English Speaking Parents and Guardians

ZIS recognizes the value of effective and timely communication with parents and works to foster such communication. ZIS uses a variety of strategies to engage our families who speak languages other than English in their homes. Some of these strategies are:

- Use of our Language teachers, Parent Helpers, support staff and student leaders as translators. This is particularly so with our Japanese and Korean-speaking families, a segment of our population that has grown significantly over the last two years. We tap into the expertise of the learners in our community – staff and students alike – to help us communicate with our families about upcoming school events, important academic opportunities for students and concerns about student progress in school.
- Translation of school documents into Mandarin, Japanese and, when possible, other languages such as Korean.
- Translation services at school events including Parent/Teacher Conferences, Information evenings and more.

Professional Development

At ZIS, we regard all teachers as language teachers, and seek to optimize opportunities for teachers and students to increase their linguistic awareness and competencies. Teachers are offered professional development opportunities and collaboration time with EAL teachers to ensure that instruction is challenging, yet differentiated according to the linguistic proficiency, academic background, and learning needs of the student.



Language Policy Review

The ZIS Middle Years Programme Language Policy was created and is updated by a committee of staff. Subsequent to authorization and the formation of the first ZIS IB Diploma cohort, the ZIS IB Diploma Program Coordinator will create a Language Policy Steering Committee comprised of language teachers, subject teachers, librarian, coordinators, principal and parents. The purpose of this committee will be to ensure that the ZIS Diploma Programme Language Policy is reviewed and updated as needed to meet IBDP requirements and to reflect the language profiles, needs, and preferences of our students and their families.

