British International School

Language Policy

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1. Mission and Philosophy

British International School Lubumbashi (BISL) is committed to developing multilingual, interculturally competent learners who embrace linguistic diversity as a pathway to global citizenship. Our language policy reflects the International Baccalaureate Organization's mission and Cambridge International's commitment to excellence in language education.

Core Beliefs:

BISL believes that language is the foundation of learning, identity, and intercultural understanding. We recognize that:

- **Multilingualism enhances cognitive development** – Research demonstrates that proficiency in multiple languages strengthens critical thinking, memory, and problem-solving abilities
- **Mother tongue preservation strengthens identity** – A student's home language is integral to self-esteem, cultural pride, and academic success

- **Language facilitates international-mindedness** – Communication across linguistic boundaries develops empathy, respect for diversity, and global awareness
- **Translanguaging is a powerful learning tool** – Strategic use of multiple languages scaffolds understanding and validates students' linguistic resources
- **Language learning is a shared responsibility** – Teachers, parents, librarians, and the school community collectively support linguistic development

Key Objectives:

- Develop English proficiency as the primary language of instruction while respecting and celebrating home languages
- Establish French and multiple home languages (Arabic, Hindi, Spanish) as central to our multilingual curriculum, particularly in Cambridge Primary
- Ensure all students demonstrate proficiency in at least two languages by graduation
- Create a culturally responsive school environment where linguistic diversity is visible, valued, and integrated into learning
- Provide transparent pathways for language learning across Cambridge Primary, IB MYP, and IB DP programmes
- Engage families as partners in their children's linguistic development
- Build staff capacity to support multilingual learners effectively

2. Policy Scope and Applicability

This policy applies to all members of the BISL community:

- Students in Cambridge Primary (Grades 1-6)
- Students in IB MYP (Grades 7-10)
- Students in IB DP (Grades 11-12)
- Teaching and non-teaching staff
- Parents and legal guardians
- Administrative personnel

The policy encompasses all aspects of school life:

- Curriculum design and instruction
- Assessment and evaluation
- Library resources and collections
- School events and celebrations
- Student support and enrichment programmes
- Community engagement and partnerships
- Staff recruitment and professional development

3. IB Learner Profile Connection

BISL's Language Policy is grounded in the IB Learner Profile attributes, which directly connect to multilingual development:

Learner Attribute	Connection to Language Learning

Inquirers	Students investigate language systems, explore communication across cultures, and ask critical questions about how language shapes thought and meaning
Knowledgeable	Students deepen understanding of English, French, and mother tongues, appreciating the complexities of grammar, vocabulary, and cultural expression
Thinkers	Students think critically about language choices, analyze diverse texts, and synthesize ideas from multiple linguistic sources
Communicators	Students express themselves confidently in English, French, and home languages, adapting their communication to different audiences and contexts
Principled	Students demonstrate integrity in academic writing, properly attribute ideas from other sources, and respect intellectual property across languages
Open-Minded	Students appreciate diverse linguistic perspectives, recognize that "right" can look different across cultures and languages, and embrace bilingual and multilingual identities
Caring	Students show empathy by learning languages of peers, valuing home languages of classmates, and using language to build community and understanding
Risk-Takers	Students courageously use languages they are learning, embrace uncertainty, and persist through challenges in language acquisition
Balanced	Students balance academic language proficiency with creative expression, intellectual rigor with emotional connection to language
Reflective	Students reflect on their linguistic journey, assess their progress in multiple languages, and set goals for continued language development

4. Languages at BISL

4.1 English – Language of Instruction (LOI)

English serves as the primary language of instruction across all three programmes because:

- It is the most widely spoken language globally and facilitates international communication
- It is the preferred language of instruction for parents enrolling in BISL
- It provides access to IB and Cambridge International programmes and resources
- It is the language in which most international education, scientific discourse, and professional communication occurs
- It enables students to participate fully in the broader international education community

Status: English is the language of instruction but not necessarily the mother tongue of all students. The school provides robust support to ensure all students achieve academic proficiency in English.

4.2 French – Second Language

French is established as the second language of instruction beginning in IB MYP, reflecting:

- Its status as an official language in the Democratic Republic of Congo (BISL's host country)
- Its importance as a gateway to Francophone African literature, culture, and communication
- Its role in international diplomacy, business, and intellectual exchange
- Its value as a bridge to understanding African linguistic and cultural identity

Status: Mandatory in IB MYP; continued in IB DP.

In Lubumbashi, French functions as the primary local and administrative language of daily life, business, and public services, and it is therefore a natural bridge between BISL and the wider community.

4.3 Mother Tongue Languages – Cambridge Primary

BISL celebrates the linguistic diversity of the Cambridge Primary community. Students bring rich home languages that include:

- **Hindi** (spoken by many students from India and Indian diaspora families)
- **Arabic** (spoken by families from the Middle East and North Africa)
- **Spanish** (spoken by families from Latin America and Spain)
- **Other languages** (Swahili, Mandarin, etc.) represented by individual students and families

Status: These languages are:

- Actively supported through library resources, school events, and classroom translanguaging
- Celebrated through cultural celebrations including Diwali, Eid, Día de Muertos, and language appreciation weeks
- Integrated into Cambridge Primary Units of Inquiry
- Reinforced through parent community engagement and guest speakers

Looking ahead, BISL recognizes the growing importance of Swahili as a regional language in Central and East Africa. While Swahili is currently supported as a home language through library resources, translanguaging practices, and community events, the school intends to develop Swahili as a formal subject offering in the coming years, subject to staffing, timetabling, and student demand.

5. Multilingualism and Cultural Identity

5.1 Multilingualism as a Cornerstone

Multilingualism at BISL is understood not simply as the ability to communicate in multiple languages, but as a fundamental aspect of student identity, cognitive development, and international competence. Research demonstrates that multilingual individuals exhibit:

- Enhanced executive function and cognitive flexibility
- Deeper understanding of linguistic structure and language use
- Greater cultural empathy and intercultural communication skills
- Stronger sense of identity and connection to family heritage
- Increased career opportunities in an interconnected global economy

5.2 Language as Cultural Identity

At BISL, we recognize that language carries culture—values, ways of thinking, history, and identity. When we support a student's mother tongue, we affirm:

- Their family's heritage and contributions to the global community
- Their right to maintain connections with family members who may speak primarily in their home language
- Their cognitive development and academic achievement (research shows mother tongue proficiency supports learning in additional languages)
- Their psychological well-being and sense of belonging within the school community

School celebrations such as **Diwali** (Hindu festival), **Eid** (Islamic festival), and others provide opportunities for students and families to celebrate their languages and cultures authentically within the BISL community. During these events:

- Students present in their mother tongues

- Families share traditional stories, songs, and customs in their languages
- School displays feature multilingual signage and resources
- Teachers integrate these celebrations into Units and learning experiences

6. Language Policy Across Learning Continuum

6.1 Foundational Principles for All Programmes

Across Cambridge Primary, IB MYP, and IB DP, BISL's language approach is guided by:

Inquiry-Based Learning: Language develops through purposeful inquiry, authentic communication, and meaningful contexts rather than isolated skill practice.

Translanguaging as Strategy: Teachers strategically encourage students to draw on their full linguistic repertoire to construct meaning, scaffold learning, and develop concepts.

Assessment as Learning: Language assessment is ongoing and formative, providing feedback that supports continued development rather than simply measuring achievement.

Teacher as Language Facilitator: All teachers, regardless of subject, recognize their role in supporting language development through explicit instruction, modeling, and responsive teaching.

Library as Language Hub: The school library is a vibrant multilingual space featuring:

- Collections in English, French, and home languages represented in our community
- Digital resources, audiobooks, and multilingual literature
- Student-led book clubs and reading circles in multiple languages
- Partnerships with families to recommend and contribute culturally relevant texts

Community Partnership: Families are partners in language development through:

- Regular communication in multiple languages when needed
- Invitations to share expertise and traditions
- Encouragement to support mother tongue learning at home
- Participation in school language celebrations and events

7. Cambridge Primary Language Framework

7.1 Philosophy and Approach

Cambridge Primary language education emphasizes meaning-making, communication, and the development of confident, creative language users. The curriculum focuses on:

- **Oral Language Development:** Students engage in purposeful listening and speaking activities across Units of Inquiry
- **Reading Proficiency:** Building fluency, comprehension, and a love of reading through diverse texts and genres
- **Writing Development:** Supporting students in using writing to communicate ideas, tell stories, and express creativity
- **Multilingual Awareness:** Helping students understand how languages work, appreciate linguistic diversity, and value their home languages

7.2 Languages in Cambridge Primary

Language	Focus	Integration	Support

English (LOI)	Primary language of instruction; academic and communicative proficiency	All subject areas; explicit literacy instruction; read-alouds; writing across curriculum	Teacher modelling; guided reading; writing workshops; small group instruction
French	Language acquisition beginning Grade 1; cultural understanding of Francophone world	Dedicated French lessons; integration into Units of Inquiry; songs, rhymes, stories	Native or native-like French speaker; age-appropriate resources; multimedia materials
Mother Tongues (Arabic, Hindi, Spanish, others)	Language maintenance and development; cultural identity; cognitive support	Units of Inquiry; library resources; student presentations; classroom translanguaging; school celebrations	Parent involvement; multilingual classroom materials; celebration of cultural events; translanguaging strategies

7.3 Cambridge Primary Units – Multilingual Integration

Each Unit of Inquiry provides authentic context for language development across multiple languages:

- **Theme:** Students might explore "Community and How It Functions"
- **English Focus:** Reading narratives about communities; writing about their own communities
- **French Integration:** Learning French vocabulary related to community helpers; listening to stories about French-speaking communities
- **Mother Tongue Connection:** Students present their family's community traditions in their home languages; parents invited as guest speakers to discuss their professions and contributions
- **Translanguaging:** Students may brainstorm in home language, research in English/French, and present findings using multilingual resources

7.4 Mother Tongue Support in Cambridge Primary

The school actively supports maintenance and development of home languages through:

Dedicated Classroom Time:

- Students are encouraged to use mother tongues for brainstorming, processing complex concepts, and peer support
- Translanguaging is strategically employed to scaffold understanding before introducing concepts in English

Library Resources:

- Picture books in Arabic, Hindi, Spanish, and other languages spoken by students
- Bilingual dictionaries and visual word cards
- Digital resources including audiobooks and storytelling in home languages
- Staff actively seek recommendations from families to expand multilingual collections

School Celebrations:

- **Diwali:** Students share stories, songs, and traditions in Hindi and other Indian languages; families invited to lead celebrations; traditional music and language featured
- **Eid:** Islamic traditions, prayers, and greetings in Arabic integrated into whole-school celebration
- **Día de Muertos:** Spanish language and Mexican cultural traditions celebrated through storytelling, music, and family participation

- **Language Appreciation Weeks:** Throughout the year, individual languages are highlighted through assemblies, classroom activities, and family sharing sessions

Family Partnership:

- Parents invited as guest speakers to share expertise in their professional fields while modeling home language use
- Families encouraged to contribute multilingual children's literature to school library
- Home language learning supported through regular communication and encouragement
- Parents invited to classroom celebrations, storytelling sessions, and cultural events

Special Sessions:

- Guest educators or trained teachers may conduct special sessions in home languages for interested students
- Bilingual students are encouraged to become language models and peer supporters

8. IB MYP Language Framework

8.1 Language and Literature (English)

English Language and Literature is taught as a core subject across all five years of MYP at BISL. The course develops:

- **Receptive Skills:** Listening and reading comprehension across diverse texts, genres, and media
- **Expressive Skills:** Speaking and writing for various purposes and audiences
- **Analytical Skills:** Critical examination of how language creates meaning, represents perspectives, and reflects cultural contexts
- **Intercultural Competence:** Understanding that communication is culturally situated and developing respect for diverse linguistic practices

Students study both literary and non-literary texts from multiple cultures and time periods, with particular attention to:

- World literature including African, Francophone, and postcolonial authors
- Texts that explore identity, community, and global issues
- Multiple genres: narrative, poetry, drama, visual texts, and digital media

8.2 Language Acquisition – French

Mandatory Requirement: All MYP students study French as a Language Acquisition course.

French is taught as an additional language beginning in Year 7, building on any prior exposure from Cambridge Primary. The course is structured according to IB Language Acquisition Phases:

Phase	Year(s)	Proficiency Level	Focus
Phase 1-2	7-8 (MYP 1-2)	Emerging Communicator	Basic communication; foundational vocabulary; simple phrases; present tense structures
Phase 3	9(MYP 3)	Capable Communicator	Expanded vocabulary and grammar; simple past and future; basic paragraph writing; conversation skills
Phase 4-5	10-11(MYP 4-5)	Proficient Communicator	Complex grammar structures; extended writing; analysis of texts; cultural understanding; academic French

Integration with Curriculum:

- French language is integrated across Units of Inquiry

- Students read Francophone authors and explore African French-speaking countries and cultures
- French is used in interdisciplinary projects when appropriate
- Library collections include French-language resources for research and pleasure reading

8.3 Mother Tongue Support in MYP

Students whose home language is not English are supported in:

- **Translanguaging Strategies:** Teachers strategically allow students to use home languages in brainstorming, processing, and collaborative work
- **Peer Support:** Multilingual peers are encouraged to support language development and provide translation when helpful
- **Library Resources:** Collections include materials in languages spoken by student population
- **School Events:** Celebrations include multilingual components; students encouraged to present and participate in home languages
- **Guest Speakers:** Parent community invited to contribute expertise and share professional knowledge while modeling language use

8.4 EAL Support in MYP

Students whose first language is not English and who require additional support receive:

- **In-Class Support:** EAL-trained teachers or teaching assistants provide scaffolding, simplified explanations, and additional practice
- **Small Group Instruction:** Pull-out or push-in sessions focusing on academic language and subject-specific vocabulary
- **Extended Time:** Additional time provided for assessments and assignments as needed
- **Differentiated Materials:** Adapted texts, graphic organizers, and visual supports
- **Peer Collaboration:** Opportunities to work with English-proficient peers

9. IB DP Language Framework

9.1 Language A: English Language and Literature

All students in the IB Diploma Programme study English at either Standard Level (SL) or Higher Level (HL). The course develops sophisticated understanding of:

- **Communication and Literature:** How language works across literary and non-literary texts
- **Textual Analysis:** Close reading and interpretation of complex works
- **Intercultural Understanding:** Literature as window into diverse perspectives and worldviews
- **Written and Oral Communication:** Articulate, nuanced expression in academic and creative contexts

Assessment Components:

- External examinations (papers and oral commentary)
- Internal assessments (individual oral, written tasks)
- Develops in Years 12-13 with rigorous literary and linguistic study

9.2 Language B (French) – Language Acquisition

French B is offered as a Language Acquisition course at both Standard Level and Higher Level for students with prior learning experience.

The course develops:

- **Communicative Competence:** Ability to interact effectively in various contexts
- **Cultural Knowledge:** Understanding of Francophone cultures, particularly African contexts
- **Linguistic Accuracy:** Command of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation
- **Strategic Competence:** Ability to sustain communication despite limitations

Assessment Components:

- Written exams (reading, writing, listening)
- Oral examination (conversation and interactive communication)
- Internal school-based assessments
- Practical communication in authentic situations

9.3 Mother Tongue Language Options in DP

To support students whose best language is not English, BISL explores the following provisions:

Self-Taught Language Option:

- Students may pursue Literature or Language and Literature in their mother tongue as a self-taught option in Language A
- School provides support, resources, and guidance; student takes independent responsibility for study
- Requires strong motivation and commitment from student and family

Hindi Language and Literature (if sufficient demand):

- If DP cohort includes multiple Hindi-speaking students, the school may offer Hindi Language and Literature at SL
- Taught by qualified Hindi educator
- Provides opportunity to study home language at rigorous academic level

External Language Partnerships:

- School may partner with IB-approved online providers (such as Pamoja Education) to offer additional language options not taught on campus
- Allows students to study less commonly taught languages while maintaining IB standards
- Flexible scheduling accommodates school calendar

Bilingual Diploma:

- Students may pursue two Language A subjects (English and mother tongue) to earn a Bilingual Diploma
- Requires strong proficiency in both languages
- Demonstrates high level of bilingual achievement

9.4 EAL Support in DP

Students requiring English language support in the DP receive:

- **Enrichment Classes:** Additional instruction focusing on academic writing, oral communication, and subject-specific language
- **Extended Time:** Additional time on examinations if documented as an access arrangement
- **Differentiated Support:** Adapted materials, vocabulary support, and feedback focused on language development

- **Coordination with EAL Specialists:** Ongoing collaboration between DP coordinators and language support specialists

10. Language Acquisition and Proficiency

10.1 Language Proficiency Goals by Programme Level

Programme	English	French	Mother Tongue
Cambridge Primary (End of Year 6)	Academic proficiency in English across subjects; fluent communication in social and academic contexts	Foundational oral communication; recognition of basic written forms; age-appropriate listening comprehension	Maintenance and development; cultural connection; cognitive support for English learning
IB MYP (End of Year 11)	Academic proficiency in complex texts; analytical writing; presentation skills; Phase 5-6 communicator in English	Phase 3-4 communicator in French; ability to understand and produce structured text on familiar topics; Phase 5 if continued from Primary	Continued development; ability to discuss academic topics in mother tongue if maintained
IB DP (End of Year 13)	Sophisticated analysis and expression; Phase 6 proficient communicator; ability to write persuasively and analytically	Phase 5-6 in French; ability to discuss complex topics with accuracy and nuance; cultural understanding of French-speaking world	Bilingual proficiency if pursued as Language A option; continued cultural connection

10.2 Language Proficiency Assessment

Formative Assessment:

- Ongoing classroom observation and feedback
- Teacher-student conferences discussing progress and goals
- Portfolio of student work across languages showing growth over time
- Self-assessment and reflection on language development

Summative Assessment:

- Cambridge Primary: Teacher assessments aligned to Cambridge curriculum standards
- IB MYP: Unit tests, presentations, written assessments; aligned to IB assessment criteria
- IB DP: External examinations; internal school-based assessments; standardized against IB marking standards

Placement and Progression:

- New students' language proficiency assessed at admission through
    - Written and oral assessments
    - Teacher interviews and observations
    - Review of prior school records
- Students may move between language classes based on
    - Assessment data and progress
    - Teacher recommendations
    - Student and family preference (with coordinator guidance)

11. Mother Tongue Support and Preservation

11.1 Rationale for Mother Tongue Support

Research clearly demonstrates that support for mother tongue/home language learning benefits students in multiple ways:

- **Cognitive Development:** Strong foundation in home language facilitates acquisition of additional languages and academic achievement
- **Identity and Self-Esteem:** Valuing a student's language validates their identity and family, strengthening confidence and engagement
- **Academic Success:** Students who maintain home language proficiency often demonstrate stronger overall academic performance
- **Cultural Connection:** Home language maintains connection to extended family, cultural heritage, and family history
- **Bilingual and Multilingual Competence:** Supporting multiple languages develops proficiency in each language over time

11.2 School Strategies for Mother Tongue Support

Explicit Valuing of Home Languages:

- School communications acknowledge and celebrate linguistic diversity of community
- Multilingual signage throughout school building displays English, French, Arabic, Hindi, Spanish, and other languages
- Library collections include resources in languages spoken by student population
- School website features multilingual welcome and key information
- Report cards and parent communications available in additional languages when needed

As part of this commitment, BISL is exploring the phased introduction of Swahili as a taught subject in future years, in addition to its current status as a supported home language within the community.

Translanguaging in Classrooms:

Teachers at all levels are trained and encouraged to:

- Allow students to use home languages during brainstorming and collaborative problem-solving
- Permit students to ask questions in home language before restating in English
- Use student-provided translations to support peer understanding
- Recognize and celebrate code-switching as sophisticated linguistic practice
- Create "language-safe" environments where all languages are heard and valued (see Section 13 for detailed translanguaging practices)

Library as Multilingual Center:

The school library is a focal point for mother tongue support through:

- **Collections:** Intentional building of multilingual collections including
    - Picture books in Arabic, Hindi, Spanish, Swahili, and other languages
    - Chapter books and young adult literature in home languages
    - Poetry and cultural narratives reflecting student backgrounds
    - Bilingual dictionaries and visual references
    - Digital resources: audiobooks, educational videos, storytelling in multiple languages
- **Staff Development:** Library staff trained to

    - Recommend multilingual titles based on student interests and proficiency levels
    - Support students conducting research in multiple languages
    - Connect families with resources for home language development
    - Facilitate book clubs and reading circles in multiple languages
- **Family Partnerships:** Library actively engages families by
    - Seeking family recommendations for multilingual purchases
    - Inviting families to donate culturally significant literature
    - Creating "family reading" collections featuring parents' favorite children's books in home languages
    - Organizing family reading nights where languages are celebrated

Celebration of Cultural Events:

BISL calendars include celebratory events that honor student linguistic and cultural diversity:

Diwali (Hindu Festival of Lights - October/November):

- Whole-school assembly featuring student performances in Hindi and other Indian languages
- Traditional songs sung in original languages
- Stories told in Hindi about festival meaning and traditions
- Families invited to share traditional food, decorations, and customs
- Student-created displays feature Hindi and English text explaining festival significance
- Classroom activities explore Diwali stories, traditions, and languages

Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha (Islamic Festivals):

- Recognition of Islamic holidays and their significance
- Traditional greetings ("Eid Mubarak") taught in Arabic to whole school community
- Stories of Eid traditions and their meaning shared in multiple languages
- Muslim students' families invited to share customs and celebrations
- Arabic language and script featured in classroom displays and activities
- Inclusive, respectful approach ensures all students understand and appreciate Islamic traditions

Día de Muertos (Day of the Dead - November 1-2):

- Exploration of Mexican traditions and their linguistic/cultural context
- Spanish language instruction through traditional songs, poetry, and stories
- Student and family contributions of altars, photographs, and remembrances
- Connections made to how different cultures honor and remember loved ones
- Spanish-language literature and poetry featured

Language Appreciation Weeks:

- Throughout school year, individual languages are highlighted
- Featured languages rotate to include all represented in community
- Activities include

- Classroom instruction in basic greetings and phrases
- Guest speakers (parents, community members) sharing expertise
- Multilingual storytelling and performances
- Food and traditions from cultures where language is spoken
- Book displays and library resources in featured language

Monthly Family Guest Speaker Programme:

BISL recognizes parents as vital educators and cultural resources. The school implements a systematic Family Guest Speaker Programme:

Purpose:

- Highlight parent expertise and professional knowledge
- Model authentic language use in professional contexts
- Connect school curriculum to real-world applications
- Build community and family engagement
- Validate diverse career paths and contributions

Process:

- Coordinators identify themes for each month aligned with Units of Inquiry
- Teachers suggest professional areas relevant to their curriculum
- Parents volunteer to present on their expertise (engineering, medicine, business, arts, etc.)
- Presentations can be conducted in English, French, or combination with translanguaging
- Parents encouraged to incorporate their home language naturally (greetings, key concepts, storytelling)
- Presentations are recorded for future access by students unable to attend live session

Examples:

- Parent engineer presents on bridge construction (English with Hindi examples/greetings)
- Parent physician discusses global health challenges (French-speaking parent presents in both English and French)
- Parent artist demonstrates traditional art forms while sharing stories in Spanish
- Parent environmentalist discusses conservation efforts with Arabic-language resources

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Exposure to diverse career possibilities
- Authentic communication in English, French, and home languages
- Understanding that language is tool for professional and personal success
- Appreciation for parent expertise and family contributions
- Connection between school learning and real-world application

11.3 Home Language Learning Support

While primary responsibility for home language maintenance rests with families, the school supports this through:

- **Communication:** Regular encouragement to families to use home language at home
- **Resources:** Lists of multilingual resources, books, apps, and websites for family language learning

- **Homework Practices:** Teachers encourage students to discuss homework in home language before writing in English
- **School-to-Home Communication:** Key messages sent in multiple languages when possible
- **Library Access:** After-school library access for families seeking multilingual resources

12. Community and Family Engagement

12.1 Family as Partners in Language Development

BISL recognizes families as essential partners in language learning. Research demonstrates that family engagement is among the strongest predictors of student language proficiency and academic success.

12.2 Family Engagement Strategies

Communication in Multiple Languages:

- Key school communications translated into languages spoken by significant portions of community
- Admission letters and documents available in English, French, and select home languages
- School newsletter features content in multiple languages
- Emergency communications sent in multiple languages
- Parent-teacher conference invitations include offer of interpreters or translated materials

Family Information Sessions:

Annually, the school conducts information sessions for parents addressing:

- Overview of school language policy and how it supports children's development
- Strategies families can use to support multilingualism at home
- Benefits of maintaining mother tongue for academic and personal growth
- How to navigate language choices and progression through school

These sessions are:

- Offered in English and French
- Include childcare to facilitate attendance
- Use interpreters for other language groups as needed
- Feature presentations from language specialists and educators

Home Language Partnership Agreement:

Upon enrollment, families sign a commitment to:

- Support their child's English language development
- Maintain and support mother tongue use at home
- Engage with school language learning activities and celebrations
- Communicate regularly with teachers about language support needs
- Participate in school events celebrating linguistic diversity

Guest Speaker and Expert Panels:

As described in Section 11.2, the school systematically invites parents to serve as:

- Professional experts sharing their field knowledge

- Cultural ambassadors sharing traditions and languages
- Mentors for career exploration
- Reading partners and storytellers
- Curriculum contributors for Units of Inquiry

Multilingual Library Resources and Recommendations:

- School library staff actively solicit parent recommendations for multilingual titles
- Families are invited to donate culturally significant books in home languages
- Parents are recognized as experts on appropriate, engaging literature for their children
- Library maintains "parent favorites" collection featuring books parents choose for their children

Language Learner Support:

For families new to international education or multilingual environments:

- School provides guidance on
    - Expected language development timelines
    - How students transition between languages
    - Signs that a child needs additional language support vs. expected developmental variation
    - Strategies to support both English and home language simultaneously

13. Translanguaging and Multilingual Practices

13.1 Translanguaging Definition and Rationale

Translanguaging refers to the strategic use of a student's full linguistic repertoire—including all languages they know—to construct meaning, support learning, and develop new understanding.

Key Principles:

- Translanguaging is **not** code-switching or mixing languages randomly
- It is a **strategic, purposeful** use of languages to support learning
- It recognizes multilingualism as an **asset** rather than a deficit
- It is grounded in research showing that using home language **supports** (rather than hinders) additional language learning
- It creates **psychologically safe** learning environments where students feel valued

13.2 Translanguaging Practices Across BISL

In Primary Classrooms:

Teachers employ translanguaging by:

- **Allowing Initial Processing:** Students may brainstorm in home language before expressing ideas in English
- **Peer Support:** Encouraging students to discuss concepts with peers in shared home language before contributing to class in English
- **Vocabulary Building:** Using home language to explain new concepts, then introducing English vocabulary
- **Comprehension Check:** Allowing students to demonstrate understanding in home language initially
- **Bilingual Resources:** Providing books, posters, and materials with text in multiple languages

- **Student-Led Translation:** Creating opportunities for multilingual students to support peers through peer translation

In Middle Years Classrooms:

Teachers expand translanguaging by:

- **Unit of Inquiry Design:** Structuring inquiry so students can research in multiple languages and synthesize learning
- **Collaborative Learning:** Organizing small groups strategically so multilingual students can support peers
- **Assignment Scaffolding:** Allowing initial drafts in home language before formal submission in English
- **Source Materials:** Providing access to texts, articles, and videos in multiple languages for research
- **Discussion and Debate:** Permitting students to use home language during small group discussions before whole-class engagement in English
- **Metacognitive Reflection:** Having students reflect on which language they think in for different subjects and why

In Diploma Classrooms:

Translanguaging in DP is more sophisticated:

- **Multilingual Research:** Encouraging students to consult sources in multiple languages for extended essays and investigations
- **Bilingual Discussion:** In small group seminars, students may use translanguaging to explore complex ideas
- **TOK (Theory of Knowledge) Discussions:** Exploring how different languages represent and shape understanding of knowledge
- **Extended Essays:** Students studying mother tongue language or literature may compare texts and ideas across languages
- **Academic Writing:** Supporting students in moving from thinking in home language to articulate academic expression in English

13.3 Translanguaging Constraints and Considerations

While translanguaging is powerful, teachers maintain:

- **Balance:** Ensuring that English language development remains prioritized and student doesn't become over-reliant on home language
- **Appropriateness:** Using translanguaging for learning support, not as shortcut to avoid English language instruction
- **Explicit Teaching:** Making translanguaging purposeful and teacher-directed, not simply permitting students to use any language whenever
- **Assessment Clarity:** Being clear about whether assessment is measuring language development or content understanding
- **Teacher Preparation:** Ensuring teachers understand translanguaging principles and implement thoughtfully

14. Support for English Language Learners and English Language Acquisition Pathway

BISL implements a coherent English language acquisition pathway that ensures students who are not yet proficient in English can access the curriculum and make sustained progress toward grade-level academic English. The pathway includes systematic assessment on entry, transparent placement into support levels, a clearly defined support model, scheduled review points, and explicit exit criteria.

14.1 EAL Assessment and Placement

Upon admission, students whose first language is not English and/or whose prior schooling has not been in English are assessed to determine their current English proficiency and support needs. Assessment draws on multiple sources of

evidence, including: a short writing sample, an oral assessment (structured conversation), teacher observation and interview, review of prior school records, and information from the BISL Language Profile Form about home language(s) and previous language(s) of instruction.
Based on this evidence, students are initially placed in one of the following pathways, which are recorded on the student's language profile: mainstream classes with in-class EAL support, mainstream classes with additional pull-out EAL instruction, or an intensive EAL programme for students with very limited English. Placement decisions are made by the EAL specialist in consultation with the relevant coordinator(s) and class/subject teachers, and are communicated to families at the point of admission or shortly thereafter.

- Clear entry procedures: admission screening through written/oral tasks, observations/interviews, review of prior records, and home-language background (already present—retain and tighten language).
- Clear placement pathways: mainstream with in-class support, mainstream with pull-out support, intensive EAL (already present—add who decides, timelines, and documentation expectations).
- Clear exit criteria and review cycles: keep the current exit criteria and specify a review frequency (e.g., first review after 6–8 weeks, then each term) and who participates (EAL specialist, class/subject teachers, coordinators).

Students whose first language is not English are assessed upon admission to determine:

- **Current English Proficiency:** Through
    - Written assessment (short writing sample)
    - Oral assessment (structured conversation)
    - Teacher observation and interview
    - Review of prior educational records and English instruction
    - Home language background information
- **Placement Level:** Based on assessment, students are placed in
    - Mainstream classes with in-class EAL support
    - Mainstream classes with additional pull-out EAL instruction
    - Intensive EAL programme (if very limited English)
    - Regular monitoring and reassessment to track progress
    - Language profiling and phase placement (English)
        - BISL uses the Language Profile Form at admission to record home language(s), previous language of instruction, self-reported English proficiency, and concerns.
        - Placement decisions are made using multiple evidence points already listed in the policy (written/oral assessment, observation/interview, records review) and are recorded on the student language profile.
        - Phase placement is reviewed through ongoing monitoring and can change based on assessment data and teacher recommendations (this aligns with the current "Placement and Progression" language).

14.2 EAL Support Services

BISL provides a tiered model of English language support that combines in-class scaffolding, targeted pull-out sessions, and differentiated materials so that students can both acquire English and engage meaningfully with age-appropriate content.

In-Class Support:

- EAL-trained teaching assistants or co-teachers work alongside classroom teachers
- Provide simplified explanations, visual supports, and additional practice

- Support access to grade-level content while scaffolding language
- Help student understand instructions and participate in discussions
- Model academic language and communication patterns

Pull-Out EAL Instruction:

- Small group or individual instruction focusing on
    - Academic English vocabulary and structures
    - Language patterns common in different subject areas
    - Presentation and communication skills
    - Reading comprehension strategies
    - Academic writing conventions

Differentiated Materials and Assessments:

- Adapted texts with simplified vocabulary and shorter passages
- Visual supports: graphic organizers, diagrams, illustrations
- Extended time on assessments
- Alternative assessment formats (oral instead of written, visual instead of text-based)
- Glossaries and word banks providing support for key vocabulary

14.3 EAL Goals and Exit Criteria

Progress in English language acquisition is reviewed regularly using classroom evidence, formal and informal assessments, and teacher observations, in alignment with the whole-school language proficiency assessment framework in Section 15.

For new EAL students, an initial review takes place approximately 6–8 weeks after entry to confirm or adjust placement, followed by formal reviews at least once per term. Review meetings involve the EAL specialist, class/subject teachers, and the relevant programme coordinator, and may result in adjustments to type or intensity of support. Families are informed of review outcomes and any changes to provision through written communication and, where appropriate, parent conferences.

Students exit EAL support when they demonstrate grade-level academic English across subjects, can access the curriculum without ongoing modification, produce written work with minimal language-based errors, and participate confidently in class discussions and presentations, as described in the EAL goals and exit criteria. After exit, teachers continue to monitor progress and can refer the student back to EAL support if new needs emerge.

Goals:

By end of each school year, EAL students work toward:

- Demonstrating increasing independence in accessing grade-level curriculum
- Participating actively in classroom discussions and collaborative learning
- Producing written work meeting grade-level standards with minimal language-based errors
- Using academic language appropriately across subject areas
- Developing phonological awareness, decoding skills, and comprehension strategies

Exit Criteria:

Students exit EAL support when they:

- Demonstrate grade-level English proficiency across academic areas
- Can access curriculum without need for simplified or modified instruction
- Produce written work with minimal language-based errors
- Participate confidently in class discussions and presentations
- Have clear communication with teachers and peers in English

14.4 Language Profiling and Phase Placement (English/French)

BISL uses the Language Profile Form (Appendix A) to build a holistic picture of each student's linguistic background, including home language(s), previous language(s) of instruction, years of exposure to English/French, and family priorities for language maintenance. This profile is created at admission and updated as needed when a student's context or proficiency changes. Initial phase placement for English/French (and, where applicable, identification of EAL support needs) is based on a combination of evidence: data from the Language Profile Form, written and oral placement assessments, teacher interviews and observations, and prior school reports. Placement decisions are made by the relevant programme coordinator and EAL specialist, in consultation with class/subject teachers, and are recorded on the student's language profile and in school information systems.

Phase placement and support level are not fixed; they are reviewed at least once per term, and additionally whenever assessment data or teacher observations indicate that a student is ready for more advanced expectations or requires additional support. Families are informed of any changes to phase placement or EAL provision through reports and parent-teacher meetings, and they are invited to share input about the student's language use and development at home.

15. Assessment and Progress Monitoring

15.1 Language Proficiency Assessment Framework

Formative Assessment (Ongoing):

- Classroom observation by teachers of speaking, listening, reading, writing across contexts
- Oral language samples and transcripts analyzed for proficiency development
- Writing samples collected in portfolio format, analyzed for complexity, accuracy, fluency
- Student self-assessment and reflection on language goals and progress
- Peer assessment activities developing critical language awareness
- Informal running records and anecdotal notes tracking individual progress

Summative Assessment (End-of-Unit/Year):

- **Cambridge Primary:** Teacher assessments against Cambridge curriculum descriptors aligned to international proficiency standards
- **IB MYP:** Unit assessments aligned to IB criteria; eAssessment (external examination) in Year 11
- **IB DP:** External examinations in Language A and Language B aligned to IB assessment rubrics; school-based internal assessments

15.2 Monitoring Multilingual Learners

The school tracks:

- **English Proficiency Development:** Progress toward grade-level academic English; movement between EAL support levels
- **French Acquisition:** Progress aligned to IB Language Acquisition Phases; participation in French instruction
- **Mother Tongue Maintenance:** (For families choosing to track) Observations of students' continued use and development of home language

- **Multilingual Competence:** Students' ability to navigate between languages appropriately; use of translanguaging for learning

Communication of Progress:

- Report cards document progress in English, French, and note support for other languages when relevant
- Parent-teacher conferences include specific discussion of
    - English language development and any EAL support
    - French language progress and achievement level
    - Mother tongue development (if parents are supporting)
    - Overall language goals for next term/year

16. Professional Development

16.1 All Teachers as Language Teachers

BISL recognizes that language development is the responsibility of all teachers across all subjects. Professional development emphasizes:

- **Explicit Language Instruction:** How to teach language skills within subject areas (academic vocabulary, sentence structures, discourse patterns)
- **Differentiation for Language Learners:** Strategies to support EAL students and struggling language learners
- **Translanguaging Principles:** How to strategically use translanguaging to support multilingual learners
- **Assessment of Language:** How to assess language development within content assessments
- **Culturally Responsive Teaching:** Building on students' home languages and cultural backgrounds

16.2 School-Wide Professional Development

Mandatory Induction for New Teachers:

All new staff participate in orientation addressing:

- BISL Language Policy overview and rationale
- Student language diversity in the school community
- Strategies for supporting English language learners in mainstream classes
- Introduction to translanguaging and multilingual pedagogy
- Library resources and research support available
- Family engagement strategies
- School celebrations and how language is integrated

Annual Professional Development Days:

Teachers engage in ongoing professional learning on:

- Best practices in language teaching across age groups
- New research on multilingualism and language development
- Assessment strategies for language learners
- Differentiation and support for diverse learners
- Technology and digital resources for language learning

Targeted Workshops:

Throughout the year, teachers attend workshops on:

- (EAL Teachers) Advanced assessment and intervention strategies
- (Subject Teachers) Teaching academic language in content areas
- (Librarians) Multilingual collections development and promotion
- (All Coordinators) IB language policy requirements and implementation

16.3 EAL Specialist Training

EAL coordinators and specialist teachers participate in:

- **Professional Certification:** Advanced EAL qualifications (e.g., TESOL, Cambridge DELTA)
- **Language Assessment Training:** How to assess English language proficiency accurately and fairly
- **Intervention Strategies:** Evidence-based practices for supporting language learners with varying needs
- **Bilingual Education Research:** Current research on multilingualism and academic achievement
- **Cultural Competence:** Understanding diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds; awareness of implicit bias

17. Policy Review and Communication

17.1 Policy as Living Document

BISL's Language Policy is a "living document" that evolves in response to:

- Changing linguistic demographics of student population
- Emerging research on language development and multilingualism
- Feedback from students, families, and staff
- Updates to IB and Cambridge International requirements
- Evaluation of policy effectiveness through data on student achievement

17.2 Review Process

The policy is reviewed:

- **Annually (Informal Review):** Coordinators meet to discuss implementation, challenges, and student progress; minor revisions made as needed
- **Every Two Years (Formal Review):** Comprehensive review conducted by
    - MYP and DP Coordinators
    - Primary Coordinator and Key Stage Leaders
    - EAL Specialist and language teachers
    - Librarians
    - Parent representative(s)
    - Student representative(s) from MYP and DP
- **Revision Process:**
    - Data review: Student language proficiency, progression, language background demographics
    - Feedback collection: Surveys and meetings with parents, students, staff

- Research update: Review of current language policy and practice guidance
- Draft revision: Incorporating feedback and aligning with best practices
- Approval: Head of School review and approval
- Communication: Sharing revised policy with entire community

17.3 Communication of Language Policy

The policy is communicated through:

- **Families:** Policy summary shared during admission process; full policy available upon request; key information translated into main languages spoken by community
- **Staff:** Induction training; reference copies in staff rooms and digital access; annual reminders of key provisions
- **Students:** Age-appropriate overview in student handbooks; discussion of language expectations and support available
- **Website:** Language policy summary published; contact information for language coordinators; resources for families
- **Community:** Annual report to parents; information sessions discussing language learning and family support strategies

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Appendix A: Language Profile Form

BISL Language Profile Assessment (Administered at Admission)

Student Name: _____ **Date of Birth:** _____

Country of Origin/Background: _____ **Year Applying For:** _____

Languages Spoken at Home

1. **Home Language 1:** _____ **Proficiency:** Native / Fluent / Conversational / Beginner
2. **Home Language 2:** _____ **Proficiency:** Native / Fluent / Conversational / Beginner
3. **Home Language 3:** _____ **Proficiency:** Native / Fluent / Conversational / Beginner

Previous Education

- **Prior School(s):** _____ **Language of Instruction:** _____
- **Years in English-Medium School:** _____ **Years in Home Language Schooling:** _____
- **Other Languages Previously Studied:** _____ **Level of Proficiency:** _____

English Language Experience

- **Years Exposed to English:** _____ **Primarily Through:** School / Home / Media / Other
- **Self-Reported English Proficiency:** Fluent / Proficient / Conversational / Beginner
- **Concerns About English Proficiency:** Yes / No (If yes, explain: _____)

Family Language Preferences

- Language(s) families wish child to maintain: _____
- Support family can provide for home language: _____
- Concerns about multilingualism or language mixing: _____

Appendix B: Mother Tongue Support Resources for Families

At-Home Language Support Strategies

Create Language-Rich Environments:

- Read picture books and stories in mother tongue daily
- Tell traditional family stories, folktales, and family history in home language
- Play music, songs, and rhymes in home language
- Label household items in home language and English
- Use mealtimes for conversation in home language

Balance Languages Thoughtfully:

- Designate certain times/places for home language (e.g., mealtimes, bedtime)
- Use "one person, one language" if both parents use different languages natively
- Encourage use of home language with extended family (video calls, letters, messages)
- Read homework instructions in home language before completing in English
- Celebrate multilingualism as asset, not hindrance to English learning

Maintain Cultural Connection:

- Share cultural festivals, traditions, and foods in home language
- Teach children traditional songs, dances, and games
- Discuss family values and cultural practices in home language
- Connect children with cultural community events
- Create memory books or journals recording family stories in home language

Digital Resources for Home Language Learning

Language Learning Apps: Duolingo, Babbel, Rosetta Stone (many languages available)

Audiobooks and Podcasts:

- StoryCast: Stories in Arabic, Hindi, Spanish, and other languages
- Libby/OverDrive: Access to audiobooks in multiple languages through library

YouTube Channels:

- Storytelling in multiple languages
- Children's programmes in home languages
- Educational content in Arabic, Hindi, Spanish, Mandarin

Digital Libraries:

- Internet Archive: Free digital books in many languages
- GlobalGrassroots: Cultural narratives from around the world
- LinkedIn Learning: Professional development content in multiple languages

Recommended Reading Lists by Language

Hindi:

- *Panchatantra Tales* (Traditional animal fables)
- *Ramayana and Mahabharata* (Epics adapted for children)
- Works by Roald Dahl (translated into Hindi)

Arabic:

- *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* (Arabic origins)
- *Arabian Nights* (Alf Layla wa-Layla - classic tales)
- Modern Arabic children's literature

Spanish:

- *El Quijote* (adapted for young readers)
- Works by Gabriel García Márquez
- Latin American children's authors

[Other Languages as Appropriate]

Appendix C: Tentative Plan for Family Guest Speaker Topics and Sign-Up

Annual Family Guest Speaker Calendar

Month	Unit of Inquiry Theme	Suggested Professional Areas	Language Focus
September	Community and Identity	Education, Social Services, Government	English/French
October	Diwali Celebration	Business, Finance, Entrepreneurship	English/Hindi
November	Change and Impact	Engineering, Architecture, Technology	English/French
December	Sustainable Living	Environmental Science, Conservation	English/Translanguaging
January	Global Citizenship	Law, International Relations, Diplomacy	English/French
February	Health and Wellness	Medicine, Public Health, Psychology	English/French/Mother Tongues
March	Arts and Culture	Fine Arts, Music, Performance, Media	English/Multiple Languages
April	Eid Celebration	Various professional areas	English/Arabic
May	Digital Innovation	Technology, Coding, Cybersecurity	English/French
June	World Celebrations	Various	English/Multiple Languages

Family Volunteer Sign-Up: Coordinators reach out to families monthly to invite participation. Parents indicate:

- Preferred month(s)
- Professional expertise/topic they can address
- Grade level(s) they prefer to address

- Language(s) they will use (English, French, or combination with translanguaging)
- Any technological support needed
- Duration of presentation (15, 30, or 45 minutes)

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Approved by: Head of School, Chairman

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Next Review Date: August 26, 2027

This policy reflects BISL's commitment to multilingual excellence, international-mindedness, and the celebration of linguistic and cultural diversity within our school community. All members of the BISL community are responsible for supporting the implementation of this policy through their daily actions and commitment to valuing all languages and learners.