



# International School of Estonia Languages Policy



Updated October 2022

# Table of Contents

<a href="#">ISE Vision, Mission, Our Values</a>	2
<a href="#">IB Learner Profile</a>	3
<a href="#">ISE definition of high quality teaching and learning</a>	3
<a href="#">Statement of Philosophy</a>	4
<a href="#">Language Options: PYP</a>	4
Estonian	4
Support for Home and Family Language	4
Foreign Language French	5
English as an Additional Language (EAL)	5
<a href="#">Language Options: MYP</a>	6
Language learning options in ISE's IB MYP	6
Language and Literature	7
Language Acquisition	7
Placement in Language Courses	7
Estonian	8
Russian	8
<a href="#">Support for Learners Who Are Not yet Proficient in the Language of Instruction</a>	8
<a href="#">Intensive English Support Programme Years 3-5</a>	10
<a href="#">Support for Home and Family Languages</a>	10
<a href="#">Language Options: DP</a>	11
Language A	11
Language B: Language Acquisition	12
<a href="#">Placement</a>	12
<a href="#">Support for Learners Not Yet Proficient in English</a>	12
<a href="#">Support for Home and Family Languages</a>	13

## Vision

A globally minded community of diverse learners empowered to be agents of positive change.

## Mission - who we are and what we do

- Support a safe, caring, respectful environment that values creativity, diversity and inclusivity.
- Develop self-aware learners with the tools for fulfillment in their world and beyond.
- Provide best practice learning which empowers individuals to set and reach high standards.
- Encourage students to think globally and act locally.

## Our values - in all we do we value

- Belonging
- Agency
- Excellence
- Contribution

The core of the International Baccalaureate programs is the **IB Learner Profile**. Language development in the Primary Year Programme (PYP) strengthens the attribute of communicator in particular as well as the IB's approaches to learning (ATLs). Through an IB education, PYP learning communities use language to build a better and more peaceful world.

## IB Learner Profile

The core of International Baccalaureate programs is the **IB Learner Profile** and the International School of Estonia celebrates the promotion of these student attributes:

- Inquirer - Acquires skills for purposeful, constructive research
- Knowledgeable - Explores knowledge across a range of disciplines. Engages with issues and ideas that have local and global significance
- Thinker - Applies thinking skills critically and creatively to solve complex problems
- Knowledgeable - Explores knowledge across a range of disciplines. Engages with issues and ideas that have local and global significance
- Communicator - Receives and expresses ideas in more than one language including the language of mathematical symbols
- Risk-taker - Approaches unfamiliar situations with confidence
- Principled - Displays integrity, honesty and a sense of fairness and justice
- Caring - Develops a sense of personal commitment to action and service
- Open-minded - Respects the views, values and traditions of other individuals and cultures and is accustomed to seeking and considering a range of points of view
- Balanced - Understands physical, mental and personal well-being
- Reflective - Analyzes own strengths and weaknesses.

In support of the **IB Learner Profile** and our IB curriculum, ISE champions the aims and goals of the **International Baccalaureate Mission**:

The International Baccalaureate® aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage learners across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

## ISE definition of high quality teaching and learning

“High quality teaching and learning is learner centered, explores real-world ideas, enables individual fulfillment and builds competencies for life.”

## Statement of Philosophy

English is the official language of the International School of Estonia. Acknowledging that language is central to thinking and to inquiry, the International School of Estonia commits to the whole-language approach to teaching where all teachers are language teachers. We aim to develop the language competence of all students in all subject groups through various activities which form interdisciplinary communication: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Students will develop the ability to read, enjoy, understand, and respond to all types of texts and terminology.

Through a process-based approach, students are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning of language. Students will communicate in a variety of forms for a range of purposes and be assessed according to the IB assessment rubrics including projects, written assignments, presentations, creative writing, literary discussions, textual analysis, critical listening and e-portfolios.

Through participation in the academic programs at the International School of Estonia, students will be able to:

- further their understanding of the studied language and to explore and enjoy a variety of literature, informational text and culture;
- communicate with clarity, accuracy and imagination;
- develop a capacity to express themselves and respond in a variety of speaking, writing and listening activities, matching style and response to audience and purpose in all DP subject groups;
- develop skills in using technology in such a way as to enhance communication skills;

In addition to subject specific language content all students will utilize IB DP Approaches to Learning skills.

## Language Options: PYP

The IBO states that from at least the age of 7, all learners in the International Baccalaureate® (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP) have the opportunity to learn more than one language. With this in mind, ISE ensures that learners have access to the host country language (Estonian), their home and family language, and one other foreign language at the school, which is French.

## Estonian

ISE seeks ways to increase Estonian language and cultural learning opportunities. To this end, Estonian Language course is offered to native Estonian speakers from grades 2 to 5. The course is offered twice per week. Estonian Culture and Language class is offered to all PYP 1-5 learners once a week.

## Support for Home and Family Language

ISE is an English medium school, but our learners speak a wide range of languages. Obviously, it is not possible to offer classes in all these languages. However, because educational research makes clear that those students who maintain their home and family language will have better access to learning when working in a second or third language, it is important that we strive to provide the opportunity for learners to access their home and family language.

### Creating a Home and Family Language Class

ISE supports home and family language study for all learners. When the school receives a parental request for a home and family language course:

- the school will commit to assist in identifying a tutor and will provide that tutor with the necessary space to deliver a suitable course. If the timetable permits, lessons will be scheduled during the regular school day;
- the parent(s) will commit to paying the tutor for his/her services. This is a private arrangement between the tutor and the families for which the school has no responsibility;
- the school will continue to improve and increase home language resources in the library.

## Foreign Language (French)

Aside from the host country language, French is also offered at ISE. In PYP, French language acquisition is taught three times a week. Learners in PYP 1 and 2 are introduced to the French language through song, interactive play, vocabulary building and authentic learning tasks. From PYP 3 to 5, the students are taught in phases (beginner, intermediate, advanced) according to their level of command.

For learners in PYP 5, their transition to French language acquisition classes in MYP will be as follows. Beginner level learners will continue with this level for their first year in MYP, intermediate and advanced students will begin MYP at Phase 1. Those learners who may have more experience and/or knowledge with French may be placed in a higher phase level, on a case by case basis (with teacher input), and may be asked to complete the [MYP New Learner French Language Placement Test](#).

The learners whose home language is English will come to French as well as the learners who exited English as an Additional Language (EAL) program. Once learners exit the EAL program, they will be placed in the beginner level French class.

## English as an Additional Language (EAL)

EAL stands for English as an Additional Language and is all about supporting learners who speak a language other than English as their first language. The EAL program aims to equip multilingual learners with the English language skills they need to function conversationally, socially and academically. The EAL Specialist assists learners who often come from diverse backgrounds and typically require specialised or differentiated instruction in both the English language and their academic courses. The overall aim of the EAL support program is to offer additional help in building language skills to develop confidence in English. Therefore, the EAL specialist is to act as a mentor and liaison between teachers, parents, and the student. This places the socio-emotional well-being of the student at the forefront of their language acquisition.

- In PYP 1-5 the EAL learners practise four language domains - Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing in every class simultaneously.
- The EAL learners learn English with a Jolly Phonics Program which is a fun, research-based and learner-centred approach to teaching literacy through synthetic phonics.
- The EAL learners learn Jolly Phonics grammar units, spellings, and conversational topics and work on reading comprehension with the help of Epic, Tarheelreader, and the Worldbook Online.
- The EAL learners use assistive technology to enhance their motivation and engagement and digital skills.
- The EAL learners learn by doing. They work on the mini-projects which are aligned with the Units of Inquiry (UOI) and make effective presentations by practising public speaking.
- The EAL Learners watch animated 2-3 animated movies in English to learn new vocabulary and develop listening skills every year. They participate in discussions and write movie reviews or make physical/digital posters and presentations.

Upon admission at the school, the WIDA MODEL Assessments (Measure of Developing English Language) will be administered to the students whose home language is not English, to determine the English Language Proficiency level and the need for EAL support. Also, it is designed to measure EAL learners' progress through the academic year in English and placement in the EAL program. Our English as an Additional Language specialist Mr Valerian Gogvadze is a certified WIDA Administrator. As a flexible, on-demand language proficiency assessment, WIDA MODEL is administered twice a year for EAL learners who are new to ISE in PYP 1-5.

At the end of the school year, the students will be re-evaluated. It will then be decided if the student can exit EAL and join French.

# Language Options: MYP

## Language learning options in ISE's IB MYP

Recognising the diverse learner body with varied needs and that differentiation within our classes is crucial for success for all learners, ISE MYP (and Middle School) language learning options may include the following:

- MYP Language and literature course (English)
- MYP Language acquisition course (French)
- Middle School advanced Estonian language and literature course
- Middle School advanced Russian (home and family) language course
- English as an Additional Language (EAL) for learners who are not yet proficient in the language of instruction
- Support for home and family language.

## Language and Literature

All MYP learners at ISE are required to study a course of English Language and Literature.

MYP learners whose home and family language is not English have the option of taking the **middle school** course of advanced Estonian or Russian Language and/or Literature.

## Language Acquisition

MYP learners at ISE take French as their Language B acquisition course. The school provides French classes to MYP learners in 3 levels.

1. Emergent level learners - phase 1 and 2
2. Capable level learners - phase 3 and 4
3. Proficient level learners - phase 5 and 6

For further info see [IB MYP Language acquisition guide \(September 2020/January 2021\)](#).



## Placement in Language Courses

Learner placement in MYP Language acquisition courses is based upon the levels achieved in the PYP years, previous MYP years, placement test results and teachers' professional judgment. For learners new to ISE, the [MYP New Learner French Language Placement Test](#) will be individually administered by a senior department member separately from the class. This is to ensure the learner studies his/her additional language at a level that will lead to success. The placement test will be taken during the first week of studies in school throughout the school year.

All learners at ISE will take a French Language Acquisition placement test, to determine their progression between the phases. The placement test will be taken at the end of the academic year. The placement test takes into consideration the MYP Language Acquisition continuum and global proficiency table as prescribed in the MYP Language Acquisition Guide. It will entail the following four major sections:

1. Reading comprehension component (based on phase-specific outcomes as prescribed in the MYP Language Acquisition Guide).
2. Writing component (based on phase-specific outcomes as prescribed in the MYP Language Acquisition Guide).
3. Listening component (brief recording and answering of questions based on phase-specific outcomes as prescribed in the MYP Language Acquisition Guide.)
4. Speaking component (brief 2-3 minute question answer session around themes taught in respective phases to assess the speaking skills.)

## Estonian

The **Middle School** advanced Estonian Language and Literature course is offered to native and near-native language learners in MYP 1-5. At the end of the course some learners may take the Estonian [basic school final examination](#).

The ISE also seeks ways to provide opportunities for learning Estonian as a foreign language. The activity is offered as part of the after school activities programme (ASA) by the Estonian teacher.

## Russian

Where Russian is the home and family language, ISE offers additional home and family language support lessons twice a week for interested learners.

Middle school language courses align with the IBO MYP language acquisition global proficiency continuum developed following international standards.

# Support for Learners Who Are Not yet Proficient in the Language of Instruction

EAL stands for English as an Additional Language - it refers to learners whose first language is not English. Learners may be fluent in several other languages even if they are attending schools in which the language of instruction is English.

The **EAL program** is a component of the translanguage instructional process at the International School of Estonia. The program ensures that learners at ISE accomplish two goals:

- Master the English language, developing listening, speaking, reading, comprehension and writing skills;
- Master grade-level academic content, developing academic knowledge in all classes as appropriate.

The aim of the programme is to equip learners with the language skills they need in order for them to function conversationally, socially and academically. The EAL Specialist assists learners who often come from alternative home language backgrounds, and who typically require specialised or modified instruction in both the English language and in their academic courses. This aim is achieved through a combination of pull-out and push-in approaches as required. The overall aim of the EAL support program is to offer additional help in building language skills to develop confidence in English. The EAL Specialist works closely with teachers to monitor progress in the EAL classroom.

- To develop English skills and academic knowledge simultaneously at ISE.
- To encourage learners to use English in situations where they can communicate with the school community.
- To see direct connections between the language they use through listening, speaking, reading, writing, pair work, group work, and one on one interaction.
- To build a linguistic and cultural identity to motivate learners and raise self-esteem.

EAL learners receive support in an intensive English class by an EAL Specialist, instead of a language acquisition course. In addition, EAL learners with no previous experience of learning English receive daily help in a learner-centred class environment with subject-specific teachers. EAL needs, entry and exit from the programme, are determined using the WIDA Model Screener and the WIDA Model Online summative assessment. Incoming learners who have some knowledge of English, but are not proficient, are assessed to determine their level

using the WIDA Model screener (Measure of Developing the English Language). Our target is to administer such tests to new learners within the first week of their entry into ISE. Upon notification of a new learner, the EAL specialist/WIDA administrator will arrange, in liaison with the programme coordinator, for such testing to take place. The WIDA English Language Development Standards provide the framework for all EAL instruction.

ISE recognizes that developing academic language proficiency can take up to 5-7 years, the level of English language proficiency required to have adequate access in the mainstream curriculum. For this reason, ISE considers the support of EALs to be a long-term commitment. EAL learners receive intensive EAL support in MYP 1-5.

## Intensive English Support Programme Years 3-5

It is the school's experience, students with low levels of English who enter the Middle Years Programme struggle to perform successfully when entering the Diploma Programme, even with school-provided EAL support. It is for this reason that the school has developed an Intensive English Support Programme for learners entering the MYP years 3-5.

For new learners admitted into MYP 3, 4 or 5, a WIDA English proficiency test will be given to those learners who are speakers of English as a second or subsequent language. If the school determines that the learner is not able to learn effectively in English to a level that would allow them to be successful, he/she will enter into an Intensive English Support programme. (This level is defined as WIDA proficiency Level 3 Developing or lower). An English Support learning plan will be developed for each student.

Learners admitted to the MYP years 3 and 4 with WIDA proficiency Level 3 ("Developing") or lower, will receive Intensive English Support and a modified programme of study. These learners will also receive school-provided EAL support. Learners may continue learning in an EAL class after exiting the Intensive English Support programme.

Learners enrolling for the MYP year 5 with a score of WIDA proficiency Level 3 Developing or lower, a condition of enrollment is that the learner first attains WIDA proficiency Level 4 Expanding before progressing into MYP 5. To do this they will enter MYP 4 for up to one year. This is to best prepare for the final year of the MYP and success in the Diploma Programme. They will receive Intensive English Support and a modified programme of study. These learners will also receive school-provided EAL support. Learners may continue learning in an EAL class after exiting the Intensive English Support programme.

Intensive English classes will be taught by a suitably qualified and experienced tutor. The tutoring cost will be met by the family/s and depend on the number of learners enrolled in the programme as some cost-sharing may be possible. The school will assist families to find a tutor.

## Support for Home and Family Languages

ISE is an English-language school, but we acknowledge that maintaining home and family languages is beneficial to learning when working in a second or third language. It is important that we both at school and home provide support in finding opportunities for learners to access their first, or home and family languages.

Potential forms of home and family language support:

- Library World Languages collection development with the support of the ISE community.
- Home and family language classes (peer tutoring, conversation groups, parent instructors or language tutors).
- Use of home and family languages in research assignments, with translation for grading purposes.

### Creating a Home and Family Language Class

The International School of Estonia supports options for home and family language study for our learners. If a request for a course is made by parents after consulting with the MYP Principal-Coordinator, the school will help to the best of its ability with the management of the following elements:

- Assisting in identifying a suitable tutor. The **parent(s) will commit to paying the tutor** for their services. This is a private arrangement between the tutor and the families for which the school has no responsibility. The tutor will aid families with finding appropriate materials for the class.
- Providing the space to deliver a suitable course. If the timetable permits, lessons may be scheduled during the regular school day.

## Language Options: DP

- Language A: English Language & Literature (required for all learners)
- Language A: Estonian Literature (learners earn the Bilingual Diploma)
- Language A: Home and Family Language\* (learners earn the Bilingual Diploma)
- Language B: French Language Acquisition SL/HL
- Language B: French Ab Initio SL
- Language B: Spanish Ab Initio SL (online via Pamoja Education)\*
- Language B: Spanish SL/HL (online via Pamoja Education)\*

\*additional fees apply for these options

### Language A

All Diploma Programme learners are required to study English Language and Literature at ISE.

Learners whose home and family language is Estonian, or who have previously studied MYP Estonian Language & Literature, are encouraged to study Language A: Estonian Literature. Placement is determined by the current Estonian Literature teacher.

### Language B: Language Acquisition

Diploma Programme learners have several options for Language B at ISE. The school provides French B at both the standard and higher level, on site. Additionally, learners with no prior background in French, or who have previously studied MYP French Language Acquisition in phases 1 or 2, may elect to study French Ab Initio on site.

Learners may also choose to study Spanish with Pamoja Education online at either the Ab Initio level (for those who have previously studied MYP Spanish Language Acquisition in phases 1 or 2 or who have no background in Spanish at all), or at the standard or higher level, depending upon their previous learning level in Spanish. Records of previous phase level and/or Pamoja placement assessments will be used to determine the correct placement level.

### Placement

Learner placement in DP Language courses is based upon the levels achieved in the MYP, teacher recommendation and/or placement tests, and Diploma Programme Principal Coordinator approval.

For learners absolutely new to IBDP Language options ([group 02](#)), or those who have had a prior exposure to the Language in the same group for up to 2 years, will be admitted to the IBDP Language Acquisition ab initio level course. Learners with 2 years of language exposure or more will be admitted into Language Acquisition Standard level (SL) or Higher Level (HL) course. Placement in either SL or HL will be determined by the learner's previous records and teacher recommendations.

For learners new to ISE, a placement test will be given by the current language teacher to ensure the learner studies his/her additional language at a level that will lead to success.

## Support for Learners Not Yet Proficient in English

ISE Diploma Programme learners are expected to be proficient communicators in English, therefore no EAL services are offered for DP students. Learners need to be able to speak, read, write, and listen at a level that enables them to succeed without adaptation of the curriculum, be it reading material, writing demands, and/or speaking rate of teachers.

## Support for Home and Family Languages

While ISE learners speak a wide range of languages, it is not possible to offer classes in every language. However, educational research makes clear that those learners who maintain their mother tongue will have better access to learning when working in a second or third language; therefore, it is important that we at ISE strive to provide the opportunity for students to access their first, or home and family, language.

As such, the International School of Estonia promotes mother tongue language study for all DP students.

When the school receives a request for a home and family language course:

- the school will assist in identifying a tutor, and will provide that tutor with the necessary space to deliver a suitable course on site, if requested; if the timetable permits, lessons will be scheduled during the regular school day;
- the parent(s) will commit to paying the tutor for his/her services. This is a private arrangement between the tutor and the families for which the school has no responsibility;
- the school will continue to improve and increase home and family language resources in the library.