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IB DIPLOMA PROGRAM LANGUAGE POLICY

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Mission

At the American International School · Vienna, we empower each student with the skills and character strengths necessary to be positively impactful global citizens who strive for personal growth and excellence in an ever-changing world.

Vision

A community of innovative learners realizing their chosen futures with courage, curiosity and joy.

Core Values

Respect: We will be kind, considerate, inclusive and thoughtful in our interactions with others and the environment.

Aspire: We will pursue our passions (and interests), imagine possibilities, and make them real.

Achieve: We will strive for personal growth, always applying effort and ingenuity to the best of our ability every day.

Philosophy

AIS recognizes that communicating effectively in all subjects for a variety of purposes is key to academic success. As language is central to this success, all teachers are language teachers. We encourage students to develop their mother tongue to nurture their personal and cultural identities. Further, students learn additional languages, including German, the language of the host country, as a means of promoting intercultural awareness and global citizenship. Students are encouraged to develop a maximum level of proficiency in all their languages of study.

Language Profile

AIS has approximately 800 students with 64 different nationalities. Upon entry into AIS students are assessed for their English proficiency and placed into the appropriate level for language support. English as an additional language is provided for up to 30% of PreKindergarten and Kindergarten students and up to 20% of students in grades 1-8. Services are not provided in the high school.

Additionally, Austrian passport holders are required by law to enroll in German, the language of the host country, through grade 9. German is offered for students in Grades 1-12. French and Spanish are offered for students in Grades 7-12. Students are required to study a modern language for graduation.

Mother tongue support is encouraged and supported. Students may continue to study their mother tongue outside of the school day in different languages. In cases of IB Diploma students who desire an A language in their mother tongue, language tutorials are arranged privately with the support of tutors. Wherever possible, those tutors will have been trained in the appropriate IB Language A course.

Overview of Language Programs

As with most international schools, students come and go. As such, AIS works with families on a case-by-case basis to ensure students are able to meet their language goals. This includes considering their post-secondary educational goals where appropriate.

English

English is the language of instruction except for the modern language classes and Austrian Studies.

English as an Additional Language (EAL) support is offered to students in grades 1-8. Resource classes can provide language support for students who qualify.

Additionally, students who struggle with English are permitted to use a translating dictionary for IB DP exams in groups 3-6. Students should contact the IB DP Coordinator for more information.

German, the language of the host country

German is offered for native speakers in each grade from 1-12. IB Language A: Literature and Language and Literature courses are offered at both SL and HL.

German is offered for non-native speakers, Grades 1-12, with up to seven possible proficiency levels. In the Secondary School, German classes are organized by ability, not grade level. IB Language B Courses are offered at both SL and HL.

Additional modern languages

French as well as Spanish are taught at the basic level for Grades 7 and 8.

French and Spanish are taught at the basic, intermediate, and IB Language B levels for Grades 9-12.

IB Language A tutorials are available for selection for students who wish to study their mother tongue. These language A options are arranged depending upon the availability of a qualified teacher.

IB Language B Ab Initio courses are available for students who wish to study a new language and/or who may not have access to the Diploma Programme when their language placement does not result in a Standard Level course in German, French or Spanish. These language Ab Initio courses are arranged depending upon the availability of a qualified teacher. In the case of German B Ab Initio, students can sit in German Basic A or Basic B in their first year at AIS and work with a tutor outside of school to support the IB assessments. When enrolment allows, AIS will consider offering a German Ab Initio in the second year of the IBDP.

Professional Development

As all teachers are language teachers, professional development is encouraged and supported by AIS. Teachers may use their own professional development funds or request funds from the Director of Teaching and Learning, the High School Office, or the IB Office to support language learning and teaching.

Review

This policy should be reviewed bi-annually in the Spring.

References

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