



**International School of Curaçao**

# Language Policy

March 2024



# International School of Curacao

## Language Policy

### **Our Vision:**

Learning for global citizenship.

### **Our Mission:**

Cultures, Creativity, Knowledge

ISC provides a high-quality education using United States and internationally recognized standards in English. ISC aims to develop future citizens as individuals who are collaborative, involved, respectful, and responsible.

### **Introduction**

Students at ISC come predominantly from the local community with Papiamentu or Dutch as their first language. Students come to our school with many different language and cultural backgrounds and vary in their ability to learn languages. The staff consists of teachers who speak several languages and can offer support to non-native English speaking students. Other non-native speakers include but are not limited to Spanish, Hindi, Portuguese, and Arabic. The vast majority of our student body is formed by non-native English speakers varying in proficiency levels. Approximately 10% of our pupils are native English speakers. In total, close to 20 languages are represented in our student body.

### **Beliefs**

At The International School of Curacao we believe that:

- Ongoing language development for ISC students is a shared responsibility of all teachers, parents and students.
- When effective instruction takes place, all students can learn regardless of their language backgrounds and learning experiences.
- All teachers are language teachers and therefore students are instructed in all areas of language.
- Teachers' language should reflect correct usage and contain expressive vocabulary in order to enrich the lessons and enhance the learning experience.
- All our students are language learners and therefore all languages are equally valued and may be used for inquiry during the school day.
- The range of languages within our school poses an opportunity to reflect and celebrate the multilingual society we live in.
- Goals, learning expectations, instructions and content should be clearly and accurately communicated in order for students to become engaged in learning.

- Recognizing and supporting our students' mother tongues facilitates learning and acquisition of additional languages.
- Academic vocabulary is vital and should be used across disciplines and levels which are developmentally appropriate.
- Language rich classrooms provide opportunities for students to apply content related vocabulary in a variety of ways as well as it creates connections between languages.

## **Languages**

At the International School of Curacao, English is the language of instruction. Additional language classes in Dutch and Spanish are offered from grade 2 and up. These languages are offered in two different strands: as a second language or language 1 (L1) and as a foreign language or language 1 (L2). In the event the student number in a grade level does not warrant a class for L1 and L2, students will attend the same class but with the instruction and objectives for each level differentiated. French is offered as an International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program (DP) course.

### **English (Language of Instruction)**

#### **Elementary School (grades K-5)**

The instructional program in Language Arts has as its primary goal the development of skills in areas that enable students to use the English language effectively. The skill areas are listening, reading, speaking, spelling, grammar/usage literature, sentence structure, creative writing, expository writing, and handwriting.

#### **Middle and High School (grades 6-10)**

IB Middle Years Program (MYP) language and literature course equips students with linguistic, analytical and communicative skills that can also be used to develop interdisciplinary understanding across all other subject groups. Students' interaction with chosen texts can generate insight into moral, social, economic, political, cultural and environmental factors and so contributes to the development of opinion-forming, decision-making and ethical-reasoning skills, and further develops the attributes of an IB learner.

Language learning is an iterative process and develops through inquiry in increasingly wider contexts and deeper reading. As students progress through their MYP language and literature studies, they are expected to engage with and explore an increasing range and sophistication of literary and informational texts and works of literature extending across genres, cultures and historical periods. These texts will also provide models for students to develop the competencies to communicate appropriately and effectively in an increasing range of social, cultural and academic contexts, and for an increasing variety of audiences and purposes.

## **MYP Requirements**

MYP requires all students to take Language & Literature (English), and most MYP students take a second language; (Spanish or Dutch) Language & Literature OR (Spanish or Dutch) Language Acquisition. This may be dependent on a student's mother tongue. In the event that students are receiving learning resource support, they may be exempt from language B. All students will receive instruction in Language & Literature (English), which is the school's language of instruction. The course will be taught as a combination of language and literature, where the aspects of language use are taught through the use of literature in English, both originally written in English and literature in translation.

The second language subject group is organized into 6 phases. The phases represent a developmental continuum of additional language learning (see possible IB continuum pathways table for detailed information about each phase - MYP language acquisition guide for use from September 2020 – page 6). Depending on their prior additional language learning experiences, students may start their MYP second language course in any phase on the continuum. However, students with no prior knowledge of the second language they wish to study in the MYP should start in Phase 1. The second language teachers are in the best position to decide which phase a student will complete for his or her final assessment to satisfactorily complete the MYP course. The second language teachers will determine the beginning phase (level) for new students joining the course. Please note that the phases are not organized into age groups or MYP year.

## **High School (grades 11-12)**

In IB DP Language A: English literature, students will focus exclusively on literary texts, adopting a variety of approaches to textual criticism. Students explore the nature of literature, the aesthetic function of literary language and literary textuality, and the relationship between literature and the world.

The study of language and literature is instrumental in developing an awareness and understanding of the self and how it relates to others. Through the study of texts written originally in the language studied and in translation, students gain an understanding of the ways in which different languages and literatures represent the world and how these can reflect and help create diverse identities. Students also become aware that representations of the world vary across cultures and are encouraged to consider the reasons why, attaining a better understanding of the different ways in which people experience and represent the world.

## **Dutch Instruction**

The Dutch Program is designed to develop language skills in areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing in a gradual and logical progression. The Dutch program is offered in grades 2 through 12.

At ISC, the Dutch program is divided into two different pathways: Language 1 (L1) and Language 2 (L2) across Elementary. For Middle and High School our curriculum is aligned with the MYP curriculum; MYP Language Acquisition and MYP Language and Literature.

### **L1 /Native**

In this pathway, the student is fluent in comprehension, speaks with native or near-native proficiency and is also able to read and write in this language. Oftentimes, Dutch is the student's mother tongue and the language spoken at home with at least one of the parents/caretakers.

This pathway prepares students for the IB Dutch Language A Language and Literature course, which enables students to have their bilingual IB diploma. This (Bilingual) IB diploma is valued equal to a Dutch VWO diploma and enables students to continue their studies at Dutch Universities.

### **L2 /Non Native**

This pathway offers a Dutch language education to students who do not speak Dutch at home or have little exposure to the language. The student is not able to fully comprehend, speak, read or write in Dutch. The student is two years or more behind the level of his or her peers in the Netherlands.

Students follow this program to learn Dutch as a foreign language with the goal of learning the language at A1 up to B1 level ([Click here](#) for explanation of levels). The learning materials offered are directed towards guiding students to achieve the requirement to successfully get a CNaVT diploma in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. In the 10<sup>th</sup> grade students can participate in the CNaVT exam showing their level in areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

The two levels of exams taken are:

- CNaVT Maatschappelijk Informeel (INFO) – A2
- CNaVT Maatschappelijk Formeel (FORM) – B1

For more information, please visit: <http://cnavt.org/>

### **Dutch Language 1 Elementary (grades 2-5)**

These courses allow students with native or near-native proficiency to develop higher-level thinking skills, such as analyzing, reasoning, interpreting, and problem-solving in various situations and contexts based on their proficiency level.

We have implemented a program that reinforces their native or near-native proficiency through a series of contents reflecting curricula in schools where Dutch is the language of instruction.

Courses within this pathway lay a solid foundation for students. The contents cover linguistic and morphological language principles, critical thinking processes, vocabulary acquisition, exposure to literature of the Dutch-speaking world, as well as an in-depth knowledge of language mechanics.

### **Dutch Language 2 Elementary (grades 2-5)**

The goal of the courses in this pathway is to enable students to begin or continue their foreign language acquisition process through a communicative approach to language learning, emphasizing the linguistic and cultural aspects of the Dutch language.

A student-centered approach is used, and courses aim to develop the four basic skills of communication: listening, speaking, reading, and writing through the acquisition of the fundamentals of applied grammar. Cross-cultural understanding is fostered, and real-life applications are emphasized throughout the course.

Content includes conversational expression of feelings, ideas, and opinions in Dutch, comprehension of spoken and written Dutch, and oral and written presentation of information and ideas, in Dutch, to an audience.

### **IB MYP Dutch Language and Literature (L1, grades 6-10)**

This course is offered as a part of the R2-pathway courses and is aimed at students in the MYP programme. At the end of the year, students will have specific vocabulary that will allow them to learn, use and master terminology related to elements of literature.

The main purpose of this class is to familiarize students with text analysis as well as to have a broader knowledge and understanding of the literature and cultures of the Dutch-speaking world. This course follows six skill areas: Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, Viewing and Presenting.

In the language and Literature class students interact with a range of texts, they generate insight into moral, social, economic, political, cultural and environmental domains.

### **IB MYP Dutch Language Acquisition (L2, grades 6-10)**

The Dutch Language acquisition course is aimed at students in the MYP programme. Students will acquire the Dutch Language following the requirements of the MYP programme in a meaningful way. This will provide the students with the opportunity to understand the diversity of the world we live in, and students will reflect on the process of learning a new language through inquiry.

In addition to language acquisition, students will also gain a broader knowledge and understanding of the cultures of the Dutch-speaking world and will develop insights into the

nature of the Dutch language and culture that will allow them to establish comparisons between Dutch cultures and their own.

This subject group is organized into six phases (1 - 6), but students do not necessarily begin in phase 1. They can begin at any phase depending on their prior experience.

### **Spanish Instruction**

The Spanish Program is designed to develop the language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing in a gradual and logical progression. Students will participate actively in a positive environment, which will encourage them to enjoy the language learning experience. Spanish is offered in grades 2 through 12.

The Spanish program is divided into two different pathways: Language 1 (L1) and Language 2 (L2) across Elementary. For Middle and High School our curriculum is aligned with the MYP curriculum; MYP Language Acquisition and MYP Language and Literature.

### **Spanish Language 1 Elementary (grades 2-5)**

These courses enable students with native or near-native proficiency to develop higher thinking skills, such as analyzing, reasoning, interpreting, and problem-solving in different situations and contexts according to their proficiency level.

We have put in place a program that reinforces their native or near-native proficiency through a series of contents that reflect curricula in schools where Spanish is the language of instruction.

Courses included in this pathway provide a solid foundation for students. These contents include, but are not limited to, linguistic and morphological language principles, critical thinking processes, vocabulary acquisition, exposure to literature of the Spanish-speaking world as well as an in-depth knowledge of the language mechanics.

### **Spanish Language 2 Elementary (grades 2-5)**

The purpose of the courses included in this pathway is to enable students to begin or continue their foreign language acquisition process through a communicative approach to language learning, emphasizing the linguistic and cultural aspects of the Spanish language.

A student-centered approach is used and courses are aimed at developing the four basic skills of communication: listening, speaking, reading, and writing through the acquisition of the fundamentals of applied grammar. Cross-cultural understanding is fostered and real-life applications are emphasized throughout the course.

The content includes conversational expression of feelings, ideas, and opinions in Spanish, comprehension of spoken and written Spanish, and oral and written presentation of information and ideas, in Spanish, to an audience.

### **IB MYP Spanish Language and Literature (L1) (grades 6-10)**

This course is offered as a part of the L1-pathway courses and is aimed at students in the MYP program. At the end of the year, students will have specific vocabulary that will allow them to learn, use, and master terminology related to elements of literature.

The main purpose of this class is to familiarize students with text analysis as well as to have a broader knowledge and understanding of the literature and cultures of the Spanish-speaking world. This course follows six skill areas: Listening, Speaking, Reading, writing, viewing, and presenting.

In the language and Literature class students interact with a range of texts, and they generate insight into moral, social, economic, political, cultural, and environmental domains.

### **IB MYP Spanish Language Acquisition (L2) (grades 6-10)**

The Spanish Language acquisition course is aimed at students in the MYP program. Students will acquire the Spanish Language following the requirements of the MYP program in a meaningful way. This will provide the students with the opportunity to understand the diversity of the world we live in, and students will reflect on the process of learning a new language through inquiry.

In addition to language acquisition, students will also gain a broader knowledge and understanding of the cultures of the Spanish-speaking world and will develop insights into the nature of the Spanish language and culture that will allow them to establish comparisons between Hispanic cultures and their own.

This subject group is organized into six phases (1 - 6), but students do not necessarily begin in phase 1. They can begin at any phase depending on their prior experience.

### **IB Diploma Program (grades 11-12)**

The International School of Curacao offers languages in the DP in English, Spanish, French, and Dutch. Courses are offered at Standard Level (SL) and Higher Level (HL): HL and SL courses differ in scope but are assessed against the same grade descriptors, with HL candidates expected to demonstrate the various elements of the grade descriptors across a greater body of knowledge, understanding and skills.

### **English A: Literature (L1)**

This course develops understanding of the techniques involved in literary criticism and promotes the ability to form independent literary judgments. In language A: literature, the formal analysis of texts and wide coverage of a variety of literature—both in the language of the subject and in translated texts from other cultural domains—is combined with a study of the way literary conventions shape responses to texts.

### **Dutch and Spanish A: Language and Literature / Literature (L1)**

The language A: language and literature course introduces the critical study and interpretation of written and spoken texts from a wide range of literary and non literary genres. The formal analysis of texts is supplemented by awareness that meaning is not fixed but can change in



respect to contexts of production and consumption. This three-part course allows the student to explore the language A in question through its cultural development and use, its media forms and functions, and its literature. Students develop skills of literary and textual analysis, and also the ability to present their ideas effectively. A key aim is the development of critical literacy.

### **English and Spanish B (L2)**

English and Spanish B provide students with the opportunity to acquire or develop an additional language and to promote an understanding of other cultures through the study of language. The course allows students to access the target language as someone with prior experience of the language. Language B is designed for students who possess a degree of knowledge and experience in the target language.

### **Language ab Initio (French *ab Initio*) (L2)**

Language ab initio is a language acquisition course designed for students with no prior experience of the target language or for those students with very limited previous exposure. It should be noted that language ab initio is offered at SL only.

At the language ab initio level, a student develops receptive, productive, and interactive communicative skills. Students learn to communicate in the target language in familiar and unfamiliar contexts

### **School-Supported Self-Taught Language A**

In the event a language is not offered at ISC or the number of students is not enough to warrant a language class, we offer a language A class within this framework of the IB. This course is often referred to as "School Supported Self-Taught Language A", primarily aimed at students in the Diploma Programme (DP) for their Group 1 subject requirement.

The "School Supported Self-Taught Language A" course is designed for students who are proficient in a language. This option allows students to study literature in their native language or a language of high proficiency, fostering a deep understanding and appreciation of the culture and literature associated with that language.

### **English as an Additional Language (EAL) Instruction**

The goal of the EAL program is to provide English-language learners with additional instruction and resources for the acquisition of English.

In the EAL program, students will :

- Develop academic language for success in the content areas.
- Develop socially and culturally appropriate communication skills.
- Take pride in their cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

EAL services are offered to students from 1-12 grade who meet certain criteria:

- They are non-native English speakers.
- They have not attended a school with English language instruction for at least five consecutive years.
- They may be studying English for the first time.

EAL students receive intensive language instruction during the course of the instructional day. This is done by pull-out to the EAL classroom, plug-in and/or in collaboration with the classroom teachers.

Students who receive direct EAL services are pulled out from foreign language classes at elementary and middle school levels. At a high school level, classes are scheduled according to students' needs and scheduling availability. Additionally, after school support will be provided to newly enrolled students during their first year at ISC.

Students enrolled in the program are assessed annually with an English-as-Another Language test administered by the EAL Department. New students are also assessed as soon as they start school. This test determines proficiency levels and is used as criteria for placement and exiting.

### **Mother Tongue Support**

Understanding and maintaining the mother tongue is essential to the intellectual development of individuals and strengthening of their cultural identity.

Students are given opportunities to use their mother tongue in order to clarify concepts, express ideas in class and/or communicate with peers.

Prospective and new students are paired with a buddy who has the same native language whenever possible.

Classroom teachers and parents are encouraged to promote the use of the mother tongue in order to facilitate the acquisition of new languages. This is done through online articles, parent evenings and documentation presented during orientation sessions.

Translating options are available upon request during parent-teacher conferences. Multilingual support staff is available for such services.

The Media Center is equipped with materials in different languages to support literacy and research. These materials include but are not limited to periodicals, audio books and databases.

Books and novels read in class are often accompanied by translated versions whenever possible and considered beneficial to the language development. Oftentimes materials are

provided in both languages in subjects which have technical vocabulary or differences in the way concepts are expressed.

## **Placement**

Parents fill the Home Language Survey during the admission process and indicate the student's language abilities in English, Spanish and Dutch on the Application Form. This information is used to place students in foreign languages and/or EAL classes whenever applicable. Parents are requested to provide the following information: native language, language(s) spoken at home and other languages.

When a student's language level is not clearly defined during the admission process the language teacher(s) will conduct a placement test.

Foreign Language teachers will administer a placement test to new students upon entry. There is a two week trial period at the beginning of each year to determine if level placement is appropriate.

Placement decisions for IB languages are done after considering teacher recommendations, results from placement tests and ability level.

## **Professional Development**

Our staff is expected to attend training offered on campus throughout the school year as well as training required to comply with IB requirements. The purpose is to provide teachers with best teaching practices to support all areas of language development.

Teachers have the opportunity to recommend and/or request training sessions to the Administration.

## **Review Schedule**

ISC's Language Policy will be reviewed every other school year.

Last reviewed/revised: March 18, 2024.

## **Resources**

ISC Parent-Student Handbook

Danielson, C., Enhancing professional practice: a framework for teaching, ASCD, 2007

IBO Guidelines for Developing a School Language Policy  
[http://occ.ibo.org/ibis/documents//g\\_0\\_learn\\_amo\\_0804\\_2\\_e.pdf](http://occ.ibo.org/ibis/documents//g_0_learn_amo_0804_2_e.pdf)

Beacon Hill Language Policy

<http://www.beaconhill.edu.hk/content/language-policy>

Oulu International School Language Policy

<http://oulu-ois.com/>

Taihu International School Language Policy

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