

## **WINS LANGUAGE POLICY**

### **Introduction**

English is the language of instruction at WINS, but the school is located in a community where about 50% of the school population comes from the host country and their first language is Italian.

Therefore, WINS has the dual objective to combine an international program with a strong Italian language and culture base so that students can benefit from the values and advantages of both the IB approach as well as the rich Italian cultural heritage.

Being an international school, teachers from countries with different English dialects with the result that all types of English are acknowledged and recognized. Teachers who teach other languages are the only ones allowed to communicate in languages other than English both with students and fellow staff members.

### **Language Philosophy**

The pedagogical team at WINS firmly believes that we must use languages in order to use them. We encourage teachers, students, and staff to use English as their language of communication in all circumstances. Students are surrounded by their native language when they are not at school or are with their families. Therefore, we want to ensure that students are firmly placed in an English-speaking environment while they are at WINS.

WINS believes that languages are a fundamental tool for the development of internationally minded students, and we encourage students to study three languages from the beginning of the primary program.

Native languages other than English or Italian will be supported throughout the school. In the Diploma Years section, native languages other than English or Italian will be supported through self-taught subject offerings. In lower grade levels, students will have access to extra-curricular courses organized by the school. The libraries will support students through all levels with sections dedicated to the varying native languages of our students.



## Language Policy

### English Requirements

WINS is a non-selective school that considers its status as an international school a duty to be inclusive and support the enrollment of both foreign and domestic students who wish to approach an international education out of either need or choice. For us, this implies that there are no minimum English language entry requirements up to grade 6.

Students whose initial level of English is below the grade-working level will be supported through in-class differentiated activities, specific curricular ESL lessons, and/or additional extra-curricular ESL lessons. Each situation will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and the best individualized solution will be implemented.

From grade 7 onward, the school wishes to provide students who are not fluent in English with the opportunity to join the program if they meet minimum requirements and demonstrate a strong motivation to learn. For this reason, the minimum requirements for enrollment are as follows:

- **Grades 7 and 8:** A2 level of the European framework, KET with Merit, or a passing mark on our placement test.
- **Grades 9 and 10:** B1 level of the European framework, PET, or a passing mark on our placement test.
- **IBDP:** High B1 level of the European framework, PET with Merit, IGCSE English Second Language grade C or equivalent, or a passing mark on our placement test.

Students who meet only the minimum entry requirements for English are obliged to follow additional English classes that are aimed at reaching a full B1 level/PET by the end of ICE Year 1 and a full B2 level/FCE by the end of IBDP Year 1.

### Language in the PYP

Language is an essential tool for young learners to construct meaning and make connections to support their development. At WINS, language instruction is transdisciplinary and incorporated into the program of inquiry, and all teachers at WINS are teachers of language. Language instruction and learning outside of the program of inquiry is also taught through a constructivist, inquiry-based approach to encourage authentic learning experiences for language development. The PYP follows the IB Language Scope and Sequence, which includes three interrelated language strands: oral language, written language, and visual language. These three interrelated strands consider both the receptive and expressive aspects of language, and encourage a balanced approach to language development.



Language instruction aims to develop balanced learning and includes phonics, grammar, guided reading, subject specific vocabulary development, reading of a variety of texts, authentic writing experiences and writing for different purposes, the writing process, and creative expression. Lessons are differentiated to meet the needs of all students, and classroom teachers regularly assess their students' language development throughout the year to inform individual and small group instruction. Teachers regularly communicate with families about student progress. Parents are an important part of the WINS community, and in the PYP parents are encouraged to read with their children and/or support their child's language learning at home.

Though English is the primary language of instruction, all PYP students also have five hours of Italian lessons per week starting in the Early Years. From transition, all primary students choose an additional language of study. Children are also encouraged to share and study their mother tongues, and we strive to make connections with our families to ensure that children have access to books and resources in their mother tongue in our PYP library. Families are also encouraged to regularly use their mother tongue to support the continued development of mother tongue language learning.

### **Language in the MYP**

Direct language instruction happens in the relevant language classes. However, all teachers are considered language teachers and are expected to include strategies to support language learning and incorporate a range of teaching and learning strategies to ensure that students have access to necessary skills in terms of oral communication, written communication, and visual communication.

In the MYP, language is divided into two departments: Language & Literature and Language Acquisition, every student is required to take at three languages. Students' allocation into either of these courses is directly related to their level of fluency in the specific language (as indicated by prior test scores or our placement tests).

Though English is the primary language of instruction, all MYP students take one language course in Italian. Native-speaking Italian students follow an IB MYP Italian Language & Literature course that meets the standards of the national curriculum. Students who are not native-speaking Italians follow the Language Acquisition course, where teaching and learning is organized into six phases.

### **Language Acquisition**

Students are placed in classes according to the IB's continuum of language learning phases. The school has a flexible placement policy that allows student movement throughout the school year in relation to the student's progression along this curriculum.



### **Moving from Language Acquisition to Language & Literature**

The curriculum for language acquisition has six phases, which do not correspond to a particular age group or MYP year level. Students do not necessarily begin in phase one; they can begin at any phase, which depends on their prior experiences with the target language, and may exit from any phase on the continuum. Students in phases five and six will be monitored for integrated into the relevant Language & Literature group, if available.

### **Language Certifications**

WINS believes that setting objectives and celebrating achievements are essential components in the learning process. Because of this, we encourage students to obtain language certifications for all languages studied at school.

During the Primary Years, children are prepared to take the Cambridge Young Learners' exams to then move on to PET and FCE in the Middle Years. During the Diploma Years, students are encouraged to take either CAE and CPE or IELTS depending on their future goals.

The study of other foreign languages is encouraged with the additional objective and opportunity of achieving officially recognized language certifications, which include the following: DELE A2, B1, and B2 for Spanish; DELF A2, B1, and B2 for French; Goethe-Zertifikat A2, B1, and B2 for German.

### **Non-Native English-Speaking Teachers**

Non-native English-speaking teachers who are required to teach subjects in English are required to have an appropriate level of the language, intended as a full C1 or upper intermediate level. The school offers professional language training for teachers and staff who wish or need to improve and consolidate their level.

The school encourages non-native English-speaking teachers to teach subjects other than their own language, as this is seen as a way to promote cultural exchanges which enrich the environment and are beneficial to the students.

### **Handwriting Policy**

In line with its approach of inclusiveness, WINS has opted not to teach cursive as there are multiple styles that are very different and would risk being confusing for



the students. WINS has adopted a shared standard for letter formation to be taught in its Primary grades, but other styles will be accepted as long as they are clearly legible (see attachment, taken from Letters and Sounds: Principles and Practice of High Quality Phonics).

Italian teachers may teach the Italian cursive style in Italian classes.

## **Policy Review**

The School Manager and Academic Coordinator and the pedagogical leadership team is in charge of the policy revision process.

The School Manager and Academic Coordinator, the pedagogical leadership team, and the program coordinators will be drafting the policy on the basis of indications provided by IB documents. Teachers will be asked to provide feedback on the draft, and the policy will be updated accordingly if the input is consistent with IB guidelines and the school vision.

For the first couple of years, the policy will be revised on a yearly basis and either confirmed as is or modified accordingly. The School Manager and Academic Coordinator will be in charge of approving the new version and sharing it with the school community through the school website and on Managebac.

After that, the policy will be revised on a rotational basis at least every evaluation cycle.