

# **LANGUAGE POLICY**

## **IMATRAN YHTEISLUKIO – THE IB SCHOOL OF SOUTH KARELIA**

### **SCHOOL 2209**

#### **IBO Mission statement:**

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

#### **School's Mission statement:**

**We educate open-minded and active lifelong learners, who respect and appreciate other people and cultures as well as their own culture. They learn how they can have an influence with their own actions in different situations.**



## IB learner profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

As IB learners we strive to be:

### INQUIRERS

We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

### KNOWLEDGEABLE

We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

### THINKERS

We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

### COMMUNICATORS

We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

### PRINCIPLED

We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

### OPEN-MINDED

We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

### CARING

We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

### RISK-TAKERS

We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

### BALANCED

We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intellectual, physical, and emotional—to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

### REFLECTIVE

We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

The IB learner profile represents 10 attributes valued by IB World Schools. We believe these attributes, and others like them, can help individuals and groups become responsible members of local, national and global communities.



## **LANGUAGE POLICY**

### **IMATRAN YHTEISLUKIO (THE IB SCHOOL OF SOUTH KARELIA) SCHOOL 2209**

#### **Introduction**

All IB World Schools are required to have a written language policy. This document is the language policy of Imatran yhteislukio, the IB School of South Karelia. It is written by the administration, DP Coordinator and teachers. It is consistent with the principles and practices of the IB. The language policy is reviewed at the beginning of each school year.

This document includes provisions for second-language teaching and mother tongue language support that meets the needs of students and reflects the principles of the program. The Language Policy also sets out the philosophy and aims of language teaching and learning, and reviews the available options in Group 1 and Group 2. Additionally, the document defines our support for studying mother tongue languages.

#### **Philosophy and Aims**

At Imatran yhteislukio we think that language is the basis of all communication and learning. Language learning is a lifelong process. Language shapes our thinking and is a central component of intellectual and personal growth. It is an expression of culture and an integral part of our identity.

The role of language is central to communication and the developments of critical thinking. It is essential for the cultivation of intercultural awareness, international-mindedness and global citizenship (Language and learning in IB programmes, IBO). Following the IB Learner Profile the emphasis on intercultural awareness prepares students for a world where diversity has become a feature of everyday life.

Along with their mother tongue, people absorb the culture of their community and build their own identity. This enables social interaction and the continuity and development of culture. Instruction in mother tongue and literature will guide students to appreciate their own culture and language.

In our school we see all teachers as language teachers. They promote the students' communication skills through their subjects and classes. Reading and writing skills develop in each IB course. The aim is that students become balanced bilinguals who are highly proficient, literate and knowledgeable in at least two languages and cultures.

#### **Language Profile**

The working languages at Imatran yhteislukio are Finnish and English. The language of instruction in the IB Diploma Programme is English. English is also the language of official communication with IBO and the language of documentation. The promotional material is available both in Finnish and in English. The school's website [www.iblukio.fi](http://www.iblukio.fi) is translated into both languages.

The IB studies at Imatran yhteisluokio comprise three academic years, the first of which is the pre-Diploma year. During the pre-Diploma year the students study the English language intensively and get accustomed to studying different subjects in English.

In addition to studying English as a foreign language, the Finnish students also study Finnish as the first language and Swedish as the second national language. It is also possible to choose French, German, Russian and Spanish as optional languages.

During the Diploma Programme years the available languages are Finnish A Literature, English A Language and Literature, English B, Finnish B and Spanish ab initio.

### **Mother tongue**

Most IB students are native Finnish speakers, with several exceptions: (seven students have Russian as their mother tongue, two students' first language is English, one student's first language is Persian, one student's first language is Greek and one student has Hungarian as his mother tongue.)

Language	Number of Speakers
Russian	7
English	2
Greek	1
Hungarian	1
Persian	1

Finnish A Literature and English A Language and Literature are classroom based Group 1 languages. Russian, Persian and Hungarian are offered as self-taught languages, each with a supervising teacher.

### **How the language of the host country is promoted**

The area around the IB School of South Karelia is mainly monolingual; most of the students are Finnish. All foreign students are advised to participate in the Finnish courses for immigrants. Those courses are arranged by the students and their guardians through other institutions, and take place after school hours.

### **Professional development in language learning and teaching**

Our school encourages administrators and teachers to develop their language skills by attending language courses. All teachers participate in IB workshops and use IB guides and OCC as resources.

### **Language studies in the Diploma Programme**

The students plan their language programme in close contact with the teachers, coordinator and parents.

In the Diploma programme language courses are offered in two of the subject groups:

Group 1 – studies in language and literature

Finnish A Literature HL/SL  
Hungarian A Literature SL self-taught  
Russian A Literature SL self-taught  
Persian A Literature SL self-taught  
English A Language and Literature HL/SL

#### Group 2 – language acquisition

English B HL/SL  
Finnish B HL/SL  
Spanish ab initio SL

Students in IB World Schools are required to study

- one group 1 and one group 2 subject, or
- two group 1 subjects

#### **Group 1**

In Group 1 the courses are designed for students who have previous experience of using the language of the course in academic contexts.

- The literature course allows the close study of literary texts and their varying contexts
- The language and literature course focuses on critical literacy and the way of meaning in texts is constructed by, among other things, the contexts of production and reception

Imatran yhteisluokio offers Finnish A Literature at higher/standard level and English A Language and Literature at higher/standard level.

#### Language A Literature

The purpose of Language A literature is to train students to observe the world by means of literature. Literature is seen as diverse art form: the students become acquainted with different genres and literary works from different periods.

The students are guided to analyse and interpret various aspects of the works independently and through critical thinking. The purpose is to develop the students' writing and oral presentation skills and to strengthen the students' respect for their cultural heritage. By studying world literature students also learn to appreciate other cultures.

The ability to analyse language and express oneself effectively in different communicative contexts is an integral part of studying literature.

#### Language A Language and Literature

Language A: language and literature comprises four parts—two relate to the study of language and two to the study of literature.

The study of the texts produced in a language is central to an active engagement with language and culture and, by extension, to how we see and understand the world in which we live. A key aim of the language A: language and literature course is to encourage students to question the meaning

generated by language and texts, which, it can be argued, is rarely straightforward and unambiguous. Helping students to focus closely on the language of the texts they study and to become aware of the role of each text's wider context in shaping its meaning is central to the course.

The language A: language and literature course aims to develop in students skills of textual analysis and the understanding that texts, both literary and non-literary, can be seen as free-standing compositions and, simultaneously, as products of the culture in which they were conceived and interpreted. The course is designed to be flexible—teachers have the opportunity to construct it in a way that reflects the interests and concerns that are relevant to their students while developing in students a range of transferable skills. An understanding of the ways in which formal elements are used to create meaning in a text is combined with an exploration of how that meaning is affected by reading practices that are culturally defined and by the circumstances of production and reception.

All DP students are expected to study at least one group 1 course.

Group 1 is also the site where the IB recognizes the right of all students to study their mother tongue at the same level as other DP subjects.

## **Group 2**

Group 2 offers two modern language courses:

- language B – for students with some experience of the language
- language ab initio – for students with little or no experience of the language

Imatran yhteisluokio offers English B at higher/standard level and Finnish B at higher/standard level and Spanish ab initio at standard level.

The courses share an emphasis on the importance of understanding language acquisition as a process that also involves the recognition and understanding of another culture. The consequent reflection on the way one's immersion in one's own culture leads one to assumptions about the world that are not necessarily shared by others is important in the development of intercultural awareness and international-mindedness.

The main focus of the course is on language acquisition and development in the four primary language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. These language skills should be developed through the study and use of a range of written and spoken material. Such materials will extend from everyday oral exchanges to literary texts, and should be related to the culture(s) concerned. The material should be chosen to enable students to develop mastery of language skills.

A successful language B student should not only learn and assimilate basic language structures but also be able to use the language in a range of situations and purposes for which and in which the language is used. These situations extend to professional and social interactions. Students should learn to use language and register that is appropriate for a wide range of audiences and real-life situations. The language B student learns how to communicate effectively in a number of situations and within the culture(s) where the language is spoken.

In the context of language B the successful use of a language consists of demonstrating competence in three distinct but interrelated areas:

Language	handling the language system accurately (grammar, syntax)
Cultural interaction	selecting language appropriate to a particular cultural and social context
Message	understanding ideas and how they are organized in order to communicate them properly.

During the course of study, and through the development of all language skills, students should be encouraged to develop confidence in the use of language, sensitivity to the audience and an ability to communicate their ideas clearly.

### **Links to other school policies**

#### **Academic honesty policy**

In connection to their language and other IB studies, all students are informed about the principles of effective referencing and citing and they are aware of the consequences of plagiarism.

#### **Assessment policy**

Language teachers assess all language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) regularly. Formative and summative assessments in the classroom provide information on students' progress. Standardised tests and external examinations are used to ensure a fair application of assessment criteria.

Assessment policy and language policy are linked in the sense that all assessment takes place in the language of instruction. Since some students' English skills may be limited at the beginning of the IB studies, it is essential to follow their progress in the language. As all teachers are language teachers, the progress can be discussed in the teachers' meetings.

#### **Special Educational Needs Policy**

The coordinators, subject teachers and guidance counsellor support students when they plan their Diploma Programme studies and further studies.

A student may have difficulties with learning languages, for example dyslexia. Students with additional language learning needs are advised to contact the special needs teacher who can offer professional help in accordance with our school's Special Educational Needs Policy.

## **Parental involvement**

Parents are an integral part of our community of learners and provide essential support for language learning at Imatran yhteislukio. Their role is especially important in the case of students who study their native language through a self-taught programme.

## **The Language Policy review process**

The language policy is available for all students and their parents in Onedrive and also on the school's website. All teachers are familiar with the language policy and they are part of the regular review process. The review process takes place annually.

## **Resources:**

### **IBO documents:**

Guidelines for developing a school language policy.

Towards a continuum of international education, pp. 25.-7 "Learning in a language other than a mother tongue in IB programmes" and "Developing a school language policy" sections.

The Diploma Programme: From Principles into practice, p.22 "Language options and language support" section.

Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB programmes.

Language and Learning in IB programmes.