



LANGUAGE POLICY

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OVERVIEW

A language policy should foster respect for differences and value learning from others within an international community. It should be inclusive in nature, balanced and culturally diverse. It should be part of the commitment to holistic education by providing diverse and meaningful opportunities, both within and outside the traditional classroom.

PHILOSOPHY

Every teacher at TIS is a teacher of language and every member of the learning community plays a significant role in language development. Language is a medium of inquiry and plays an essential role in all content areas as it is the major connecting element across the curriculum. It is necessary not only to learn language but also to learn about language and through language.

The common language at TIS is English, the school's primary language of instruction. In our school community, the command of English is the primary key to accessing information and communicating. We recognize that English is not the first language of many of our students and that they come to us with a range of language proficiency levels. Therefore, in order for all students to be academically successful, all teachers are committed to the growth and development of the students' English language skills.

The cultures of Macao and China are very important to our school community. Access to Chinese allows students to participate more fully in their local community and appreciate their cultural surroundings. Written Chinese will be employed in either Traditional or Simplified characters. The continued development of the first acquired language (L1) is crucial for cognitive development and in maintaining cultural identity. It is essential to have a strong foundation in one's first language, as it facilitates the acquisition of other languages.



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The development of multilingual, internationally-minded students is one of our primary goals at TIS. Those with a command of more than one language have a global advantage; therefore, TIS provides the opportunity to study additional languages. We also recognize the importance of supporting not just English and Chinese but also the home and family languages of our students. To this end, TIS is committed to fostering an environment where multilingualism is celebrated, and each student's linguistic and cultural identity is affirmed. Authentic language learning opportunities, both within and beyond the curriculum, are essential for developing our student's global competencies and international-mindedness.

See Appendix A for further information regarding teaching and learning in TIS Language programs.

TERMS AND KEY ROLES

Academic Counselor - professional educators who support students, parents and staff to ensure graduation and post-secondary aspirations. One is assigned to each student by their last name.

Administration Team - made up of the Head of School, Principals and Vice Principals, Chief Operations Officer

ASET = After School English Tutoring

Coordinator - professional educators who work school-wide to support staff in regards to specific areas of support including: IB Diploma Programme, IB Primary Years Programme, Athletic Director, Inclusive Education, Chinese, EAL.

EAL - English as an Additional Language

K-12 EAL Coordinator - oversees the EAL program in Elementary school and Secondary school

ESP - English for Specific Purposes

WRA - Writing Reading Advancement

Leadership Team - diverse group of leadership faculty who work together to provide an excellent learning environment at TIS. Includes the Head of School, Chief Operations Officer,



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Business Manager, Finance Manager, Principals, Vice Principals and the Athletic Director and Coordinators: Chinese, EAL, Inclusive Ed., IB Diploma, IB PYP. See Organizational Chart for details.

L1 Language: The first acquired language by an individual, often labeled as “mother tongue”. This is the individual most developed language in a multilingual setting.

Chinese Coordinator - oversees the Chinese Studies department at TIS

Student Services Department - faculty who work with inclusive education students and/or with students requiring social and emotional support and/or EAL

Inclusive Education Coordinator - oversees the Inclusive Education department of the school

Head of Counselling- oversees the social-emotional counselling team of the school

Student Welfare Team - faculty group tracking secondary student referrals for a variety of reasons. Made up of: High School Vice-Principal, Middle School Vice-Principal, Inclusive Education Coordinator, DP Coordinator, Academic Counsellors, and Social-emotional Counsellors.

Teacher Advisor Programme [TAP] Advisor - teacher who is the initial contact for behavioural, academic and pastoral issues in Secondary school. TAP meets every day.

EXPECTATIONS

The International School of Macao (TIS) will:

- Provide a high-quality English-medium education that develops students who have global access to further education and career opportunities through their language acquisition
- Provide for all students at TIS who may be considering career aspirations in Macau, Hong Kong, greater China, and abroad.
- Provide an educationally sound and coherent pathway in languages education from early years to graduation
- Clearly demonstrate that we value ALL cultures and languages
- Encourage understanding of cultural diversity and intercultural understanding through the promotion of international-mindedness.



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- Promote the international importance of language acquisition and the value of languages and cultures other than one's own; this is central to our TIS learning strategies
- Provide multiple entry points for language learning, a tracking system and progression pathways and continuity in linguistic developments
- Foster international-mindedness through language learning, emphasizing the use of language to affirm and express cultural identity.
- Provide students with a wide variety of language learning opportunities
- Emphasize language development in Chinese to demonstrate our commitment to the local Macau community and the greater China region; every student from Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12 will have the opportunity to learn Chinese
- Involve parents and the community in implementing and supporting the Language Policy in order to recognise their role as key stakeholders in the education and language development of their children
- Review and revise the language policy regularly

LANGUAGE POLICY

1. Language Profile

1.1 Language of Instruction

Throughout TIS, the language of instruction is English. The only exceptions to this are the Chinese and French language courses. For those students not proficient in English, the primary aim of language instruction must be to achieve an academic working level in English.

TIS recognizes the need for in-class language support and will use available resources to meet this need. When deemed necessary, TIS provides additional specialized English language instruction to students for whom English is not their L1 language.

1.2 Language as a Scaffold for Learning

At TIS, we recognize the significant role that students' L1 language plays in deepening their understanding of complex concepts and facilitating learning across the curriculum. While English is the primary language of instruction, our educational approach allows for the thoughtful integration of students' first languages as scaffolds for learning. This



translanguaging approach enables students to access academic content through their linguistic and cultural lenses, promoting cognitive development and academic success.

To implement this effectively, TIS encourages the use of diverse linguistic resources within the classroom to support concept comprehension. This may include providing access to multilingual materials, allowing discussions or explanations in students' first language, and incorporating translanguaging strategies in teaching practices. This policy aims to create an inclusive learning environment that values and leverages linguistic diversity as a tool for deeper understanding and engagement with the curriculum.

1.3 Language of Communication

1.3.1 In the Classroom

The common language of the classroom is English. To communicate effectively within the classroom, all students are required to use English to the best of their language ability. Students are taught the importance of linguistic inclusion and to understand that English, regardless of proficiency, is our community language.

We do not, however, have an English-only policy for students at TIS. Where it will add to a deeper understanding of their learning, the L1 language can be used by the students, though this should not intentionally exclude others. Teachers, as the models of good language practice, are expected to conduct the lesson in the target language of the class. Students should have the flexibility to use their L1 language as a scaffold for language acquisition.

1.3.2 Community Translation

All School policy documents are produced in English. All program documentation is produced in the target language. Wherever possible, the school translates relevant and appropriate documents written in English into Chinese, for distribution to the parent community. The school offers some presentations to the wider community in English and Chinese. When necessary, during important meetings, a translator is provided in the appropriate language, usually Cantonese or Mandarin.



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1.4 Host Country Languages

The school recognizes the importance of all students having access to the language and culture of the host country. Chinese language instruction is offered at all grade levels, and Chinese culture is promoted across the curriculum and throughout the school.

1.5 World Languages

It is recognized that the promotion of international-mindedness in the curriculum is part of the TIS mission. TIS promotes access to languages other than the language of instruction (English) and one of the languages of the host country (Chinese). French is offered as an additional acquisition language from Grade 10 - Grade 12. It is hoped, with the growth of the IB program at TIS, that we will be able to offer the School-Supported Self-Taught (SSST) Literature A classes to further enhance the promotion of L1 language to our students.

1.6 Language Assessment

Language is assessed according to Alberta Education and IBO guidelines in the areas of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Alberta Education ESL Proficiency Benchmarks have five levels in each category that are used to determine students' English proficiency levels.

2. Placement in Language Courses

2.1 Placement in English classes

Based on their admission interviews and testing, students are placed in appropriate classes to ensure their language development. Whenever possible, a balance of abilities in the classes is maintained.

2.1.1 Pre-Kindergarten- Senior Kindergarten

All prospective students participate in group interviews to determine acceptance to TIS.

2.1.2 Grade 1 - Grade 3

All prospective students are interviewed individually and participate in group interviews to determine acceptance to TIS.

2.1.3 Grade 4 - Grade 6

All prospective students sit a TIS Elementary School English entrance placement test and participate in group interviews to determine acceptance to TIS.

2.1.4 Grade 7 - Grade 12



All prospective students sit a TIS English language test to determine acceptance to TIS. If required, further English testing (WIDA assessment) may be conducted on a case-by-case basis by the EAL Coordinator or their designate. The results of the testing will be used to determine acceptance into the school and possible admission conditions may include an EAL class or ASET, and a summer school English program.

2.1.5 Grade 7-9

Some students who are beginning level English speakers are withdrawn from the Chinese classes on a temporary basis in order to receive additional English language instruction. When they attain a designated level of proficiency in English, they return to the Chinese classes and no longer attend additional EAL classes.

2.1.6 English Placement for TIS Grade 6 students entering Grade 7

TIS Grade 6 students are placed in Grade 7 English Levels as follows:

- Grade 6 students will complete a language proficiency assessment to help ensure appropriate placement. TIS uses the Alberta Language Proficiency Benchmarks and the Fountas & Pinnell reading assessment.
- Grade 6 Homeroom teachers consult with the EAL Coordinator and the Elementary and Middle School Vice Principals to determine appropriate placement for students in Grade 7 classes.
- Some students may be required to complete further testing, administered by the EAL Coordinator to determine appropriate placement.

2.1.7 New to TIS Students (Grade 7 - Grade 9)

Students are admitted throughout the year. Placement tests for new students are held in the week prior to their actual start date.

2.1.8 Returning TIS Students (Grade 7 - Grade 9)

Students returning to TIS after one year or more away are assessed in the same way as new students.

2.2 Placement in Chinese classes

2.2.1 Pre-Kindergarten – Senior Kindergarten



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All students have access to Chinese in a dual language model during their years of kindergarten.

2.2.2 Grade 1 - Grade 6

All the Grade 1 to Grade 6 students attend daily Chinese classes. Students are placed in two groups: Chinese as a first language or Chinese as an additional language.

At entry, students will consult with the Chinese Coordinator regarding appropriate language placement. Parents of new students will fill in a Chinese language background questionnaire after the student's admission has been confirmed.

Chinese teachers will observe students closely for one month and suggest changes of levels, if necessary. The Chinese Coordinator will make the final decision.

2.2.3 Grade 7 - Grade 12

At entry, students will consult with the Chinese Coordinator and Chinese teaching staff, along with their Academic Counsellor, regarding appropriate language placement. When required, students will be assessed further in their language ability prior to placement in an appropriate class. See Appendix C for Chinese course availability.

2.2.4 Chinese Placement for TIS Grade 6 students entering Grade 7

- Grade 6 students are placed in Grade 7 Chinese levels as follows:
- Grade 6 Chinese teachers make recommendations.
- Students complete a written assessment comprising reading comprehension, a writing task and, if needed, oral interviews are conducted by the Grade 6 Chinese teachers. The recommendations and written (and oral, if needed) assessments are reviewed by the Secondary Chinese teachers. Grade 7 Chinese teachers will observe students closely for one month and suggest changes of levels, as they see necessary. The Chinese Coordinator will make the final decision.
- From September to Chinese New Year, teachers, parents, and students may request a change of levels. Requests are forwarded to the Chinese Coordinator, who will make the final decision.

2.2.5 New and Returning Students

Grade 7- Grade 10



Students returning to TIS after one year or more away are assessed in the same way as new students. See Sec. 2.2.3.

2.3 Placement in Grade 10 French course

At the entry to the French Foundation 10 language course, students receive counseling from their Academic Counsellor and the French language teacher. Students will be assessed further in their language ability prior to placement in the class. Students who are deemed to be at too high a proficiency level will not be eligible to take this course. The final decision will be made by the IB DP Coordinator in consultation with the French teacher.

2.4 Placement in Grade 11 IB Diploma and Alberta High School Courses

It is strongly recommended that students study the same world language they studied in Grade 10. Change of language course decisions are made on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the recommendations of the language teachers, the Academic Counsellor, and the Administrative team.

2.4.1 Placement in Grade 11 IB Chinese courses

Prior to placement in a Chinese language course, students receive counseling from their Academic Counsellor and Chinese language staff. Students may be assessed further in their language ability by Chinese language staff and/or the Chinese Coordinator. Consultation with the students and parents is included within the course admission process. Students will be placed in the course that provides an appropriate level of academic challenge and opportunity for student success. The final decision on course placement will be made by the IB DP Coordinator in consultation with the Chinese Coordinator.

2.4.2 Placement in Grade 11 IB French ab initio

Prior to placement in the IB French ab initio class, students will meet with the French Language staff along with their Academic Counsellor. Students may be assessed further in their language ability prior to placement. Consultation with the students and parents may be included within the course admission process. Students who are deemed to be at too high a proficiency level will not be eligible to take this course. The final decision of placement will be made by the IB DP Coordinator in consultation with the French language staff.

3. L1 language Development (Chinese)

The school supports L1 language (Chinese) development as it facilitates students' cognitive development and deepens their understanding of their learning.



3.1 Elementary Grade 1 - Grade 6

All the Grade 1 to Grade 6 students attend daily Chinese classes. Students are placed in two groups. Chinese as a first language (L1 language).

3.2 Secondary Grade 7- Grade 12

L1 language students have access to Chinese A or Chinese Higher Level classes. Exceptions are made for Grade 7-9 students who need to take EAL (see 2.1.4).

4. L1 language Development (other languages)

The school supports L1 language development not only for Chinese but for all languages represented within the school community. This could involve strategies for supporting students' home languages through school programs, school partnerships, classroom learning such as translanguaging.

5. Movement within Chinese Language Programs

5.1 Elementary School

Students in Primary or Middle School may be moved to a class that is more appropriate for their level of proficiency in Chinese prior to the first reporting period.

5.2 Secondary School

Students may move from a Chinese language course to another proficiency level with the approval of the Chinese Coordinator and the Academic Counsellor. Students must be cautioned and, in some cases, will be declined from moving to lower level courses when they are appropriately qualified for the existing course placement. Prior to any change of class, students, parents and teachers will be informed.

6. Language Support for Students

EAL support is in the form of targeted pull-out sessions/classes and in-class support.

Students identified as mainstream English speakers will receive in-class support, as appropriate to their English level. In-class support is designed to support all language learners including native English speakers.

All teachers take responsibility for enabling students to access the curriculum by modifying and differentiating all types of learning experiences, teaching strategies and assessment. Wherever



possible, language specialists and subject teachers collaborate to ensure the curriculum is reinforced while language skills are being learned and developed. In addition, teachers should:

- Use the writing process to encourage written language
- Encourage oral language through collaboration
- Identify phase levels and/or English Language Proficiency Benchmarks for each student
- Appropriately scaffold learning experiences and assessment in response to the diversity of language learners in the classroom.

Students who have been identified as having additional literacy needs will be observed and referred to the Student Services Department. Program support may take the form of teacher support, in-class support, and/or pull-out.

Subject teachers are supported in delivering English language learning via the Student Services Head, the EAL Team and professional development.

6.1 Support Referral Process

In an effort to support our EAL learners, subject teachers collaborate to encourage language development and academic success. The process is as follows:

Students of concern are identified according to academic progress and through referrals from teachers, referrals from parents, or self-referrals.

- The Student Welfare Team meets bi-weekly to discuss individual students and to develop possible strategies to support teaching and learning.

RELATED POLICIES AND POLICY REVIEW PROCESS

a) Assessment

This language policy document is to be read in conjunction with the current TIS Assessment Policy.

b) Admissions

This language policy document is to be read in conjunction with the current TIS Admissions Policy and the TIS IB Admissions Policy.

c) Inclusive Education



This language policy document is to be read in conjunction with the current TIS Inclusive Education Policy.

d) Communication of Policy and Procedures to the TIS Community.

This policy and procedures document will be disseminated to staff at the beginning of each academic year and will be available to all members of the school community on the school website.

e) Policy Review Procedure

This document was created in collaboration with the TIS Leadership Team- This policy will be regularly reviewed by the Leadership Team and Heads of EAL.



Appendix A: Teaching and Learning within Language Programs

A. Components

Oral Language: Speaking and Listening

Oral language is an integral part of the learning programme. All teachers will design a variety of oral language learning engagements. Each day, students are encouraged in the use of the language of instruction in the classroom through listening and speaking learning engagements. These will be to develop, consolidate, and extend students' listening and speaking abilities.

Written Language: Reading and Writing

Reading

Teachers use a range of strategies to teach reading. The reading that takes place is authentic and when possible has relevance to other areas of the curriculum. Teachers will create regular opportunities to read to students, read with students (shared and guided texts), and have students read independently.

Writing

We identify specific text types to be taught at each grade level. As students progress through the grades, their understanding of these texts will be deepened and consolidated. Teachers will regularly model writing to students (shared and guided writing), and provide opportunities for students to write independently. Embedded in writing lessons is the modelling and joint construction of surface and deeper features of the text type. In World Languages, students are taught and practice proper spelling in the target language.

Visual Language: Viewing and Presenting

We identify the processes involved in interpreting, using and constructing visuals and multimedia in a variety of situations and for a range of purposes and audiences. This allows students to understand the ways in which images and language interact to convey ideas, values and beliefs. The teacher's role is to guide handwriting practices to ensure correct letter formation and a functional, legible, handwriting style.

B. Academic Writing Conventions

Character, spelling and punctuation conventions will reflect the international character of the school; emphasis is placed on consistency of use in a student's work.



Appendix B: Chinese Course Delivery Programs

There are four streams of Chinese course delivery in the Secondary school as set out below::

1. Chinese A

This level is focused on listening, reading, writing, and oral language. It is most suitable for highly fluent Chinese speakers and those assessed to be at a level at which they will be able to cope with the high linguistic, literary, and academic demands.

2. Chinese B Higher Level

This level incorporates listening, reading, writing and oral language at a developmentally appropriate level. It is most suitable for students who have a high level of Chinese language development, but their literary analysis skills need further development.

3. Chinese B Standard Level

This level incorporates listening, reading, writing, and oral language at a developmentally appropriate level. It is suitable for students with developing proficiency in Chinese.

4. Chinese B Foundation Level

This is an introductory program designed for students with little or no exposure to Chinese. It is aimed at cultural understanding and awareness and acquisition of basic listening and oral Chinese. This practical programme will incorporate Chinese culture and will focus on conversational Chinese. Students will also develop reading and writing skills in Chinese.



Appendix C: Secondary School Language Course Availability

Grade	English Courses	Chinese & French
Grade 7	English Language Arts 7 (ELA) English for Specific Purposes 7 (ESP) Writing and Reading Advancement 7 (WRA)	Chinese A Chinese B (HL/SL/FL)
Grade 8	English Language Arts 8 (ELA) English for Specific Purposes 8 (ESP) Writing and Reading Advancement 8 (WRA)	Chinese A Chinese B (HL/SL/FL)
Grade 9	English Language Arts 9 (ELA) English for Specific Purposes 9 (ESP) Writing and Reading Advancement 9 (WRA)	Chinese A Chinese B (HL/SL/FL)
Grade 10	English Language Arts ELA 10-1 / 10-2 English as an Additional Language ESL10 - Level 2 English Language Development 15	Chinese A Chinese B (HL/SL/FL) French (FL)
Grade 11	English Language Arts (ELA) ELA 20-1 / 20-2 English as an Additional Language ESL 10 - Level 3 English Language Development 25	Chinese A Chinese B (HL/SL/FL) French (FL)
Grade 12	English Language Arts (ELA) ELA 30-1 / 30-2 English as an Additional Language ESL 10 - Level 4 English Language Development 35	Chinese A Chinese B (HL/SL/FL) French (FL)

Note: HL = Higher Level, SL = Standard Level, and FL = Foundation Level