



## LANGUAGE POLICY

**REVIEWED:** November 2021

**AMENDED:** November 2021

**APPROVED:** December 2021

### **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 Mandarin 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 development of mother tongue language 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.



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.

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

## **TERMS AND KEY ROLES**

**Academic Counsellor** - 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

**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, Academic Counselling, Athletics, Early Childhood Education, Inclusive Education, Chinese, Technology, Finances

**EAL** - English as an Additional Language

**EAL Department Heads** = oversees the EAL program in Elementary school or in Secondary school

**ELD** - English Language Development

**Leadership Team** - diverse group of leadership faculty who work together to provide an excellent learning environment at TIS. Includes the Administration Team, Student Services Head, Managers, Teacher Librarian and Coordinators. See Organizational Chart for details.

**Mandarin 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

**Student Services Head** - oversees the Inclusive Education and socio-emotional support personnel and the EAL program 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, Student Services Head, DP Coordinator, Academic Counsellors, and secondary Counsellors. See Inclusive Education Policy.

**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 internationalism
- 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
- Provide students with a wide variety of language learning opportunities
- Emphasize language development in Mandarin 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 Mandarin
- 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 mother tongue.

#### 1.2 Language of Communication

##### 1.2.1 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 mother tongue 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 mother languages as a scaffold for language acquisition.

##### 1.2.2 Community Translation

All school documentation is produced in English. If a document is first produced in another language it will be, at the earliest convenience, translated into English and made available to the school community. 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.

### **1.3 Host Country Language**

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.

### **1.4 World Languages**

It is recognized that the promotion of internationalism 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 mother tongue languages to our students.

### **1.5 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 may be conducted on a case-by-case basis by the Head of EAL or their designate. The results of the testing will be used to determine acceptance into the school and possible admission conditions may include EAL, ELD, 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 (EAL class). 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 Gates MacGinitie language reading and vocabulary test for this assessment.
- Grade 6 Homeroom teachers consult with the Elementary and Secondary Heads of EAL 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 Head of EAL 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

All students have access to Chinese in a dual language model during their 3 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 Mandarin 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 Mandarin Coordinator will make the final decision.

### 2.2.3 Grade 7 - Grade 12

At entry, students will consult with the Mandarin 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 Mandarin 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 Mandarin 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 counselling 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 counselling from their Academic Counsellor and Chinese language staff. Students may be assessed further in their language ability by Chinese language staff and/or the Mandarin 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 Mandarin 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. Mother Tongue Development (Chinese)**

The school supports mother tongue (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 supports mother tongue.

#### **3.2 Secondary Grade 7- Grade 12**

Mother tongue 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. Movement within Chinese Language Programs**

#### **4.1 Elementary School**

Students can move between the Elementary Chinese proficiency levels after each reporting period.

#### **4.2 Secondary School**

Students may move from a Chinese language course to another proficiency level with the approval of the Mandarin 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.

### **5. 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.

### **5.1 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 and the Heads of EAL.

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 Mandarin 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 Mandarin.

### 4. Chinese B Foundation Level

This is an introductory program designed for students with little or no exposure to Mandarin. 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**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>English Courses</b>	<b>Chinese &amp; French</b>
<b>Grade 7</b>	English Language Arts 7 (ELA) English as an Additional Language 7 (EAL) Writing and Reading Advancement 7 (WRA)	Chinese A Chinese B (HL/SL/FL)
<b>Grade 8</b>	English Language Arts 8 (ELA) English as an Additional Language 8 (EAL) Writing and Reading Advancement 8 (WRA)	Chinese A Chinese B (HL/SL/FL)
<b>Grade 9</b>	English Language Arts 9 (ELA) English as an Additional Language 9 (EAL) Writing and Reading Advancement 9 (WRA)	Chinese A Chinese B (HL/SL/FL)
<b>Grade 10</b>	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)
<b>Grade 11</b>	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)
<b>Grade 12</b>	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