

# Deledda International Language Policy

**“At DIS, we believe that language is crucial for all members of the school community to develop a global mindset, allowing access to a greater range of experiences in an ever-more interconnected world .”**

This document represents DIS school-wide language policy. DIS language policy is a set of dynamic guidelines which reflects the IB continuum and our changing school community. The document is therefore updated regularly based on our students' evolving needs and IBO requirements.

It is divided into two sections: Middle Years Programme and Diploma Programme.

For more detailed information about specific subject-related programmes please refer to the documents available on the school website: <http://www.genoaschool.eu/> .

## **The School**

Deledda International School is situated in the City of Genova. We have a very low student turnover with nearly all of our students spending more than 4 years with us. This gives us the chance to create a school where our students can learn together, **taking academic steps in unison** .

## Middle Years Programme

### **Starting Point**

From September 2016, students who join the school in MYP1 are streamed sections based on English comprehension. In the top section the starting level is normally higher so English can be used as the language of communication from day 1. This allows the school to enroll international students with no knowledge of Italian. In the lower sections, teachers use a mixture of Italian and English until their level of English empowers them to study almost totally in English by MYP2.

### **The Italian Community**

Practically all of our students speak **Italian**, after having studied at Italian elementary schools, which is therefore studied as Language A. For the teaching of Italian we follow national standards, using IB principles. English is classed as a foreign language until MYP5.

**English** is a foreign language for almost every student entering the school in MYP 1. For this reason, we are able to accept students with low levels of English and then work hard on improving them, this is called “EAL” (English as an Additional Language).

In order to boost progress in MYP1, we offer 7 hours of English a week, as EAL. In addition, there are various after-school initiatives like the “Catch-up Club” where students in difficulty can work on improving their English. There are also several CAS opportunities whereby older, expert students tutor the new arrivals.

By MYP 5, we aim to get every student to a linguistic level capable of studying English as Language A. This enables a wide choice of alternatives to be studied in the Diploma Programme.

Along the path to the MYP5, we use the MYP “Phases of ability” to group students into classes in MYP 1 to 4 (where the timetable allows).

### **Streaming**

Streaming is used, with higher and lower sections, based on English ability for several year groups from MYP1 to 5 to ensure the students are taught at the right pace. This means that English is the language of instruction from MYP1 onwards in the higher stream, allowing students from all over the world to join our school. In the lower stream, Italian is also used, where deemed necessary by individual teachers, so that our school is also accessible to students with a low initial level of English.

In MYP 3, both Italian and English may be used to help students to pass the Italian National State Exams (3° Media) which are, naturally, in Italian. The choice of language is based on the common sense of the teacher, responding to the demands of the task at hand.

**From MYP4 onwards the language of instruction for all subjects, apart from Italian and foreign languages, is 100% English.**

By the end of MYP 4 we demand that all of our students have achieved MYP Phase 5 or 6 in ability in English.

**At the end of MYP4 students must show a B2 level of English in order to proceed to MYP5.**

### **Admissions and related levels of English**

For those students entering our school at different stages in the process, we have minimum standards of achievement, corresponding to the CEFR system, to help us decide if a student can follow courses comfortably. These are detailed in the table below. By using the international CEFR system, we allow potential students to see what would be expected of them, if they were to enter our school.

Years of experience allows the school to expect the following **minimum** levels of in English (these refer to the lower section).

**End of Year 1 CEFR A2**  
**End of Year 2 CEFR B1**  
**End of Year 3 CEFR B1/B2**  
**End of Year 4 CEFR B2**  
**End of Year 5 CEFR B2/C1**

### **Language A English Students**

Those students whose native tongue is English are known as Language A English speakers. Their teachers should set them specific tasks and evaluate them using Language A criteria even if they are in classes MYP1 to 5, when the majority of their classmates are not native English speakers.

Some students will achieve proficiency in English earlier than others and may be considered “Language A English speakers” earlier than MYP 5, when most students, from our experience, achieve this level of expertise. These students too would have their work graded using language A criteria, as deemed necessary by their teachers.

### **The Non-Italian Community**

Those students arriving from abroad or with non-Italian family backgrounds, could have difficulty understanding some parts of lessons delivered in Italian. For this reason, we would put them in the higher stream, where nearly everything is in English. This policy means that a student entering the school must have the minimum level of English required to enter the upper stream, hence the entrance tests.

In addition, we supply a strong Italian back-up service. This means that all of our students learn Italian to a high level, even if the language of instruction is predominantly English.

There is a diversity of language needs in the school and students with a different mother tongue, not Italian or English, have the option to continue studying it at DIS.

So, when the need arises, provision in other languages is made (Portuguese, Swedish, Farsi, Japanese etc. are just some of the languages students have studied as Language A). These courses may be offered at an extra cost.

We believe that these international students, studying English and their own mother-tongue as **Languages A** also benefit from learning Italian as a foreign language (**Language B**). This gives them a more personal, social and cultural experience in Italy, and also increases their international awareness.

### **Teachers**

It is an IB principle that all teachers are, in practice, language teachers with responsibilities in facilitating communication. A maths teacher can pre-teach vocabulary in English before facing a topic in maths, if it helps. All teachers aiming for full-time permanent contracts, must achieve a C1 level of English (CEFR) unless they teach Italian or foreign languages. All staff should have a B1/B2 level of English/Italian in order to understand school-wide communications, which are often in English and/or Italian. Help is offered to those staff requiring advice on improving their language.

This further reinforces that language learning is a life-long process.

### **Parents**

DIS families are offered advice, through parent evenings, newsletters, individual parent-teacher conferences on how to help their children progress in language acquisition.

We advise them to provide access to the English language at home via sub-titled DVDs, original version films, books from our library and internet content etc.

### **Materials**

The majority of our books will be in English, with the exception of those that are necessary for the preparation of the Terza Media Italian State Exams (MYP3), and that in all cases there will be extra materials produced by teachers (photocopies, notes...) in English.

### **MYP 5 (revised August 2013) A Year of Orientation:**

Having all reached a high level of English, with most students starting the year with the intention of gaining qualifications at C1 (CEFR) level and having achieved MYP phase 5 or 6, students will not always be streamed on language ability but sectioned in two classes of approximately equal size.

Being surrounded by students of different abilities should help a student to identify better their own strengths and weaknesses, thus making their selection of DP subjects an easier task. It is also

healthy to foster new learning environments through being exposed to other personalities and allowing new friendships to grow.

Every student, having achieved Phase 5 or 6 of English as **Language B** in MYP 4 , can now study English as **Language A** allowing a wider choice of DP study options next year.

Since, in MYP 5, English is considered Language A , it uses the criteria applicable for this subject because **“these courses are designed for students whose best language for academic work is English. A student registered for one of these courses will have no trouble with studying in English.”**

## **MYP Foreign Language (B) Policy (not English/Italian)**

Most of our students study a 3<sup>rd</sup> Language: Language B.

This is taught in phases and new students entering the school after the starting point in MYP1 must be able to enter the class at the same phase, or one phase above or below, as the year group they are entering. If their level is not adequate, they would be expected to study before being accepted or choose another language.

In the special case that a student is in a much higher phase than his age might suggest, the school would change the timetable in order to accommodate him/her in another phase/class.

We currently offer French, Spanish, German and Chinese. This selection depends on demand and can change from year to year.

The table below represents the current availability (2016) of languages and the International Certificate indicators of progress (see table below). We also bear in mind the Italian national expectations in Class 3, the age of the compulsory National Exam (3° Media).

Post Script

Exceptions:

Since the world is ever-more international, every year we find students with complicated language backgrounds. We try our best to accommodate them.

## **Diploma Programme**

### School community

Most of our students enrol in MYP1 or 4, and therefore the school community is often very similar in MYP and DP, with most students following the continuum. Very few students join our classes in DP1, after a selection process designed to assess their language profile. The mother tongue of most of our students is Italian, but by DP1 our students reach a level of English which enables them to study other DP subjects in English.

### Language philosophy

***“Teaching and learning demonstrates that all teachers are responsible for language development of students” (IB, C3, Practice 8)***

A thorough knowledge of one’s mother tongue is essential to access knowledge in other subjects

and learn new languages. Conversely, all teaching entails language and the teaching of language reflecting the DP holistic approach.

The study of language promotes self-expression and understanding of communication as essential lifelong skills to master complex phenomena through different approaches, perspectives and subjects both during the students' IB experience and in the future. In an increasingly global and interconnected world, the study of languages promotes cultural understanding and international mindedness.

The IBO and DIS believe that both the study of one's mother tongue and the study of foreign languages are key in the development of **“inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect [... and] encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.”**  
(Language B Guide)

### Organization of Group 1 and Group 2 Subjects

At DIS, the DP is designed as a continuum with the MYP programme. The school offers Group 1: Italian and English A (High Level: five hours a week, Standard Level: three hours a week) as well as several languages taught as third language within Group 2: Chinese, English, French, German, Italian and Spanish are offered as: Ab Initio (Chinese, five hours a week), Standard (three hours a week) and Higher Level (five hours a week). Other languages may be available on demand. All students must study a Language A. The level of language proficiency allows some of our students to undertake two Language A courses (Italian and English).

All DIS students take a Language B during MYP and can choose to continue in the Diploma Programme depending on their study plan. Students' placement in DP courses occurs in the second part of MYP5. To be recognized by the Italian Ministry of Education, the school offers three different tracks: linguistic, humanistic and scientific. Introductory meetings are held in MYP 4, MYP5 and DP1 to explain the nature of the programme. The school has a placement policy that allows student movement in relation to students' progression along the continuum. Students put together a programme of study in MYP 5. The school reviews the track and course of study chosen to ensure the requirements are met. The school sometimes recommends or discourages some choices based on the students' language profile, needs and results. These recommendations are not mandatory.

At DIS, professional development is an ongoing process in which qualified teachers participate in regular workshops, work on collaborative planning, address vertical and horizontal implementation of the programme, discuss assessment criteria and work on standardization. The above activities are used as a basis to provide for the learning needs and development of students.

The subject guides are the foundation of the syllabus, which is updated on a yearly basis and is available on the school website. Some choices in syllabus content are the result of discussion among colleagues and with students.

Language teaching and learning allows for and encourages the use of different media and stimuli which accommodate different students' needs, learning styles and personal preferences. The nature and curriculum of the subjects in Groups 1 and 2 promote the development of awareness of local and global issues and respect of diversity and individuality.

Initiated October 2011

Updated September 2012

Reviewed August 2013  
Updated Jan 2016