



# International School of Estonia Language Policy



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**ISE Mission** - who we are and what we do

- Develop inquirers, communicators, risk-takers and leaders
- Provide an environment of creativity, innovation and care
- Foster intercultural understanding and respect
- Empower students to implement positive change in the face of future challenges.

**Our Core Values** - the qualities that must be in place and actively followed in order for ISE to accomplish its Mission

In all that we do, we value -

- care and compassion - We believe that we have an obligation to listen thoughtfully to others, to consider their points of view and to treat them with kindness and empathy.
- the pursuit of high quality - We set high but realistic standards for everything at ISE. We regularly assess how we are progressing towards those standards and constantly seek to improve. We encourage asking, “How can we do that better the next time?”
- inquiry-based learning - “Why?” is our favorite question. We see ourselves as life-long learners and developing a joy of learning is essential to what we do.
- taking action - We are committed to making a difference. Therefore, we work hard to connect learning to service. We look beyond ourselves and seek to make genuine, positive changes in the world around us.

**Our Vision** - ISE is internationally recognized as a school that develops and empowers future innovators and leaders

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# IB Learner Profile

The core of International Baccalaureate programs is the **IB Learner Profile** and the International School of Estonia celebrates the promotion of these student attributes:

- Inquirer - Acquires skills for purposeful, constructive research
- Thinker - Applies thinking skills critically and creatively to solve complex problems
- Communicator - Receives and expresses ideas in more than one language including the language of mathematical symbols
- Risk-taker - Approaches unfamiliar situations with confidence
- Principled - Displays integrity, honesty and a sense of fairness and justice
- Caring - Develops a sense of personal commitment to action and service
- Open-minded - Respects the views, values and traditions of other individuals and cultures and is accustomed to seeking and considering a range of points of view
- Balanced - Understands physical, mental and personal well-being
- Reflective - Analyzes own strength and weaknesses.

ISE in support of the **IB Learner Profile** and our IB curriculum, also champions the aims and goals of the **International Baccalaureate Mission**:

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.

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## Statement of Philosophy

English is the official language of the International School of Estonia. Language is central to thinking and to inquiry providing opportunities to challenge first language speakers and to develop second language speakers. The International School of Estonia commits to the whole-language approach to teaching. We aim to develop the language competence of all students in all MYP subject groups through various activities which form interdisciplinary communication: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Students will develop the ability to read, enjoy, understand, and respond to all types of subject specific texts and terminology. The ongoing language development of students is the responsibility of all teachers, parents and students.

Through an inquiry based learning, and teaching language through context, students are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning of language. Students will communicate in a variety of forms for a range of purposes. Students are assessed in a variety of ways utilizing the MYP assessment criteria including projects, essays, presentations, creative writing, literary discussions, textual analysis, critical listening and portfolios.

Through participation in the academic programs at the International School of Estonia, students will be able to:

- further their understanding of the studied language and to explore and enjoy a variety of literature, informational text and culture;
- communicate with clarity, accuracy and imagination;
- develop a capacity to express themselves and respond in a variety of speaking, writing and listening activities, matching style and response to audience and purpose in all MYP subject groups;
- develop skills in using technology in such a way as to enhance communication skills.

In addition to subject specific content all students will utilize IB MYP Approaches to Learning skills.

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## Language learning options in ISE's MYP

Recognizing the diverse student body with diverse needs and that differentiation within our classes is crucial for success for all students, ISE MYP language learning options include the following:

- MYP Language and literature course (English)
- MYP Language acquisition course (French)
- Host country language and literature classes (Estonian)
- Students who are not yet proficient in the language of instruction programme (ELL)
- Support for mother tongues.

## Language and Literature

All MYP students at ISE are required to study the course of English Language and Literature. MYP students whose mother tongue is Estonian have the option of taking an additional **middle school** course of Estonian Language and Literature. For further info see [Appendix 1](#).

## Language Acquisition

MYP students at ISE take French as their language acquisition course. The school provides French from the emergent to the proficient level, on site. In the MYP, students in language acquisition are grouped into phases. ISE offers MYP language acquisition course at three possible level:

1. Emergent level students - phase 1 and 2
2. Capable level students - phase 3 and 4
3. Proficient level students - phase 5 and 6

Based on individual circumstances and requests from families students have an opportunity for self-taught language B. The availability of this option is decided case by case in consultation with the MYP Principal Coordinator. **Families are cautioned that this option means opting out from the full MYP Certificate programme.**

For further info see [Appendix 2](#).

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## Placement in Language Courses

Student placement in MYP Language acquisition courses is based upon the levels achieved in the PYP, previous MYP years, placement test and teacher recommendation. For students new to ISE, a placement test will be given by the language teacher to ensure the student studies his/her additional language at a level that will lead to success.

The placement test takes into consideration the MYP Language Acquisition continuum and global proficiency table as prescribed in the MYP Language Acquisition Guide. It will entail the following four major sections:

1. Visual interpretation component (images with some/no text stimuli).
2. Reading comprehension component (based on phase specific outcomes as prescribed in the MYP Language Acquisition Guide).
3. Writing component (based on phase specific outcomes as prescribed in the MYP Language Acquisition Guide).
4. Oral component (brief 2-3 minutes question-answer session to assess the speaking skills).

All students at ISE will take the placement test, respectively called, END OF PHASE-1, END OF PHASE-2 and END OF PHASE -3 Test, to determine their progression between the phases. The placement test will be taken at the end of the academic year.

New students to ISE will take the same tests considering the number of years they have been exposed to the language. In addition to the test results, "best-fit" approach will be applied to determine the student's placement in the phase that corresponds to his/her linguistic competencies. The placement test will be taken during the first week of studies in school throughout the school year.

## Learning of the Host Country or Regional Language and Culture

ISE seeks ways to provide opportunities for Estonian language learning. To this end, an additional **middle school** Estonian Language course is currently offered to interested learners in MYP 1-5. At the end of the course students have an opportunity to take Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) [proficiency examination](#).

Also, MYP students whose mother tongue is Estonian have an opportunity of taking an additional **middle school** Estonian Language and Literature course. At the end of the course students have an opportunity to take Estonian [basic school final examination](#).

Middle school Estonian courses align with the IBO MYP language acquisition global proficiency continuum developed following international standards. For further info see [Appendix 3](#).

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## Support for Students Who Are Not Yet Proficient in the Language of Instruction

ELL stands for English Language Learners - students whose first language is not English and who are in the process of learning English.

**The English Language Learners (ELL) program** is a critical component of the instructional process at the International School of Estonia. The program exists to ensure that students at ISE accomplish two important goals:

- Master the English language, developing listening, speaking, reading and writing skills;
- Master grade-level academic content, developing academic knowledge in all classes as appropriate.

The aim of the programme is to equip students with the language skills they need in order for them to function conversationally, socially and academically. The ELL Teacher assists students who often come from non-English-speaking homes and backgrounds, and who typically require specialized or modified instruction in both the English language and in their academic courses. The overall aim of the ELL support program is to offer additional help in building language skills to develop confidence in English. The ELL teacher works closely with teachers to monitor progress in the ELL classroom:

- To develop English skills and academic knowledge simultaneously at ISE.
- To encourage students to use English in situations where they can communicate with the school community.
- To see direct connections between the language they use through listening, speaking, reading, writing, pair work, group work, and one on one classes.
- To build linguistic and cultural identity to motivate student's learning and raise self-esteem.

ELL students receive support in an intensive English class by an ELL teacher, instead of language acquisition course. In addition, ELL students with no previous experience of learning English receive daily help in a student-centered class environment with the subject specific



teachers. ELL needs, entry and exit from the programme, are determined by using the WIDA Model summative assessment. Incoming students who have some knowledge of English are assessed to determine their level using the WIDA Model screener (Measure of Developing English Language).

ISE recognizes that **developing academic language proficiency can take up to 3-5 years**, the level of English language competence required to have adequate access in the mainstream curriculum. For this reason, ISE considers the supporting of ELLs to be a long-term commitment. The students receive intensive ELL support in MYP year 1-5 (grades 6-10).

For further info see ELL Handbook.

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## Support for Mother Tongues

ISE is an English medium school, but we acknowledge that maintaining mother tongue is beneficial to learning when working in a second or third language. It is important that we both at school and home provide support in finding the opportunity for students to access their first, or mother-tongue, languages.

Potential forms of mother tongue support:

- Library World Languages collection development with the support of ISE community.
- Mother tongue classes (peer tutoring, parent instructors or language tutors).

### Creating a Mother Tongue Class

The International School of Estonia is supportive of looking into options for mother-tongue language study for our students. If a request for a course is made by parents after consulting with the MYP Principal-Coordinator, the school will help to best of its ability with the management of following elements:

- Assist in identifying a suitable tutor.
- Provide the space to deliver a suitable course. If the timetable permits, lessons may be scheduled during the regular school day.
- The **parent(s) will commit to paying the tutor** for his/her services. This is a private arrangement between the tutor and the families for which the school has no responsibility.
- The tutor will aid families with finding appropriate materials for the class

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# Policy Alignment

ISE MYP language philosophy and policy align with our school values and other policies as outlined below. In all of these policies and procedures, the student is central.

## [IB Learner profile](#)

ISE MYP language policy reflects the learner profile of a communicator and open-minded as the students learn another language(s) in addition to their mother tongue thereby broadening their opportunities for communication. Our language policy honours and supports the linguistic background and knowledge of our students and community. In addition, our language policy supports the philosophy of international education as it advances the idea of working across boundaries, cultural and national, to gain understanding of alternative perspectives through being open-minded individuals.

## [ISE mission statement](#)

Our mission statement aims to “develop inquirers, communicators, risk-takers and leaders, and foster intercultural understanding and respect”. Part of being a communicator is learning how to interact and connect in a variety of ways, and part of fostering intercultural understanding and respect is understanding the world from different points of view. ISE MYP language policy works to both of these aims as it ensures that students learn an additional language while modelling respect and support for those whose mother tongue is something other than English.

## [ISE MYP academic honesty policy](#)

ISE MYP academic honesty policy supports students, where possible, in learning through their mother tongue; this flexibility decreases the pressure students might otherwise feel to copy and paste information from English language sources when conducting research. Instead, students can choose (where possible and appropriate) to work from multilingual sources. We also provide support for our English language learners in this regard as there may be differences in cultural understanding of academic honesty that need to be bridged. ISE MYP Academic Honesty policy states that we use MLA (Modern Language Association) Style across all subjects and grade levels. Teachers will consistently teach how to cite using MLA.

## [ISE admissions procedures](#)

We welcome students from diverse backgrounds with diverse needs. We aim to support students’ language learning regardless of their linguistic backgrounds.

## [ISE MYP assessment policy](#)

Our language policy aligns with our assessment policy because our assessment policy is directly applicable to all of our learners - regardless of their linguistic background. Flexibility is built into our assessment policy to recognize and allow for when students’ lack of vocabulary hinders their communication of their understanding. Formative assessment tasks

can be used to learn and practice language, as formative work helps a student meet the established criteria for the summative task.

### [ISE SEN- Inclusion policy](#)

All students enroll in a language acquisition course unless they are part of ELL programme or their Individual Learning Plan (ILP) specifies otherwise. An ILP would only suggest otherwise if such a plan were in the best interests of the student under recommendation by the Student Support team (SST). Upon the exit from the ELL programme the student enrolls at an emergent level in a language acquisition course.

## Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed at the beginning of each school year by all MYP teachers.

Review cycle is three years, including teacher, student and parent representatives guided by the MYP Principal Coordinator.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Language and Literature Courses

### **MYP Language and Literature (English)**

[Follow this link to the IBO MYP Language and literature subject brief.](#) Note that ISE is currently not participating in the e-Assessments.

MYP Language and Literature course develops skills in six areas:

- Listening
- Speaking
- Reading
- Writing
- Viewing
- Presenting

Language is integral to exploring and sustaining personal development and cultural identity and provides an intellectual framework that supports the construction of conceptual understanding. Students interact with a range of texts, generate insight into moral, social, economic, political, cultural and environmental domains. They continually grow in their abilities to form opinions, make decisions, and reason ethically - all key attributes of an IB learner.

MYP language and literature course:

- engages a student in the study of many aspects of the language and literature of communities and their culture
- offers a study of a range of literary and non-literary text types, writing styles and techniques
- allows students to comment on the significance of any possible contexts, audiences, purpose, and the use of linguistic and literary devices (Language and Literature).

### Objectives and Assessment Criteria

The objectives state the specific targets that are set for learning in the subject. The objectives for years 1, 3 and 5 of the programme are provided by the IBO, and their use is mandatory. In the MYP, teachers address objectives (through classroom teaching and learning - the taught curriculum) and assess criteria (through formative and summative assessment tasks - the assessed curriculum).

**Objective/Criterion A: Analysing**

Through the study of language and literature students are able to deconstruct texts in order to identify their essential elements and their meaning. Analysing involves demonstrating an understanding of the creator's choices, the relationships between the various components of a text and between texts and making inferences about how an audience responds to a text (strand i), as well as the creator's purpose for producing text (strand ii). Students should be able to use the text to support their personal responses and ideas (strand iii). Literacy and critical literacy are essential lifelong skills; engaging with texts requires students to think critically and show awareness of, and an ability to reflect on, different perspectives through their interpretations of the text (strand iv).

**Objective/Criterion B: Organizing**

Students should understand and be able to organize their ideas and opinions using a range of appropriate conventions for different forms and purposes of communication. Students should also recognize the importance of maintaining academic honesty by respecting intellectual property rights and referencing all sources accurately.

**Objective/Criterion C: Producing text**

Students will produce written and spoken text, focusing on the creative process itself and on the understanding of the connection between the creator and his or her audience. In exploring and appreciating new and changing perspectives and ideas, students will develop the ability to make choices aimed at producing texts that affect both the creator and the audience.

**Objective/Criterion D: Using language**

Students have opportunities to develop, organize and express themselves and communicate thoughts, ideas and information. They are required to use accurate and varied language that is appropriate to the context and intention. This objective applies to, and must include, written, oral and visual text, as appropriate.

<p>Subject groups <b>must</b> address/assess all strands of all four objectives/criteria at least twice in each year of the MYP.</p>
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(Language and Literature Guide 7-8).

## Middle School Estonian Language and Literature

Middle school students whose mother tongue is Estonian, have an opportunity of taking an additional middle school Estonian Language and Literature course. Middle School Estonian Language and Literature course helps to prepare students for overall success in the DP Estonian Literature course through the use of concepts and contexts. A variety of methodologies and tools are used within the Middle School Language and Literature course:

- Writing abstracts, essays, commentary
- Answering questions about text(s)
- Reflection pieces (reading diary)
- Research
- Analyzing a text or a poem
- Creative writing
- Test papers/Exams

Aims of the course:

- To engage students in the study of many aspects of the language and literature of communities and their culture.
- To study a range of literary and non-literary text types, writing styles and techniques.
- To allow students to comment on the significance of any possible contexts, audiences, purpose, and the use of linguistic and literary devices (Language and Literature).

MS Language and Literature course develops skills and is assessed in the below areas:

- Knowledge and understanding (reading, writing, listening, speaking);
- Personal response (writing, speaking);
- Structure and presentation of ideas (writing, speaking);
- Use of language (reading, writing, listening, speaking).

Students interact with a range of texts (prose, drama and poetry), generate insight into moral, social, economic, political, cultural and environmental domains. They continually grow in their abilities to form opinions, make decisions, and reason ethically - all key attributes of an IB learner.

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## Appendix 2: Language Acquisition Course

[Follow this link to IBO MYP Language Acquisition subject brief](#) Note that ISE is currently not participating in the e-Assessments.

The study of additional languages in the MYP provides students with the opportunity to develop insights into the features, processes and craft of language and the concept of culture, and to realize that there are diverse ways of living, viewing and behaving in the world. The ability to communicate in a variety of modes, in more than one language, is essential to the concept of an international education. The language acquisition course provides a linguistic and academic challenge for students in order to facilitate the best possible educational experience.

Teaching and learning is organized into six phases. The phases do not correspond to particular age groups or MYP year levels. Students do not necessarily begin in phase one - they can begin at any phase, depending on their prior experiences, and may exit from any phase on the continuum. The student's knowledge and understanding will be developed through:

- learning language
- learning through language
- learning about language (Halliday).

The language acquisition objectives represent the essential processes of language and have been organized under four communicative processes for each of the six phases.

### Objectives and Assessment Criteria

The objectives state the specific targets that are set for learning in the subject. The objectives for the six phases are provided by the IBO, and their use is mandatory. In the MYP, teachers address objectives (through classroom teaching and learning - the taught curriculum) and assess criteria (through formative and summative assessment tasks - the assessed curriculum). Subject groups must address all strands of all four objectives at least twice in each year of the MYP.

#### **Objective/Criterion A: Comprehending spoken and visual text**

Comprehending spoken, and visual text encompasses aspects of listening and viewing, and involves the student in interpreting and constructing meaning from spoken and visual text to understand how images presented with oral text interplay to convey ideas, values and attitudes. Engaging with text requires the student to think creatively and critically about what is viewed, and to be aware of opinions, attitudes and cultural references presented in the visual text. The student might, for example, reflect on feelings and actions, imagine

himself or herself in another's situation, gain new perspectives and develop empathy, based on what he or she has understood in the text.

### **Objective/Criterion B: Comprehending written and visual text**

Comprehending written and visual text encompasses aspects of reading and viewing, and involves the student in constructing meaning and interpreting written and visual text to understand how images presented with written text interplay to convey ideas, values and attitudes. Engaging with text requires the student to think creatively and critically about what is read and viewed, and to be aware of opinions, attitudes and cultural references presented in the written and/or visual text. The student might, for example, reflect on feelings and actions, imagine himself or herself in another's situation, gain new perspectives and develop empathy, based on what he or she has understood in the text.

### **Objective/Criterion C: Communicating in response to spoken and/or written and/or visual text**

In the language acquisition classroom, students will have opportunities to develop their communication skills by interacting on a range of topics of personal, local and global interest and significance, and responding to spoken, written and visual text in the target language.

### **Objective/Criterion D: Using language in spoken and/or written form**

This objective relates to the correct and appropriate use of the spoken and written target language. It involves recognizing and using language suitable to the audience and purpose, for example, the language used at home, the language of the classroom, formal and informal exchanges, and social and academic language. When speaking and writing in the target language, students apply their understanding of linguistic and literary concepts to develop a variety of structures, strategies (spelling, grammar, plot, character, punctuation, voice) and techniques with increasing skill and effectiveness.

Subject groups <b>must</b> address/assess <b>all</b> strands of <b>all</b> four objectives/criteria <b>at least twice</b> in <b>each year</b> of the MYP.
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(Language Acquisition Guide 8-10)

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### Appendix 3: Learning of the Host Country Language: Estonian Language Course

ISE seeks ways to provide opportunities for Estonian language learning. To this end, Middle School Estonian Language course is offered to interested learners in MYP years 1-5 (grade 6-10).

#### **Middle School Estonian Language**

Middle School Estonian Language course is based upon the belief that learning another language provides a powerful mode of communication through which students can explore their own culture while learning about that of another country and develop an understanding of the world around them. Estonian is a host country language and learning it through the cultural aspect helps to better understand the country and surrounding community where the students live. Language is integral to exploring and sustaining personal development and cultural identity, and provides an intellectual framework that supports the construction of conceptual understanding.

Aims of the course:

- To gain proficiency in an additional language while supporting maintenance of mother tongue and cultural heritage;
- To develop a respect for, and understanding of, diverse linguistic and cultural heritages;
- To develop the student's communication skills necessary for further language learning, and for study, work and leisure in a range of authentic contexts and for a variety of audiences and purposes.

Middle School Estonian Language course develops skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing and viewing. Skills are assessed in the following criteria:

- Responding to language (reading, writing, listening, speaking);
- Using language in spoken form: vocabulary, confidence when communicating, pronunciation and intonation, clarity of the message (speaking, listening);
- Using language in written form: writing with clarity, reading and writing skills, vocabulary and grammar (reading, writing).

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## Sources

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