



**SCHOOL OF THE NATIONS
INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE DIPLOMA PROGRAMME**

Language Policy

1 CONTEXT OF LANGUAGES USED IN SCHOOL

For an individual to actively participate in the progress of society language is essential. Language is used to transmit knowledge, communicate principles, ideas, opinions, needs, desires and emotions. Language is necessary for thinking. There are various types of language: social language, scientific language, mathematical language and artistic language. Language also refers to specific lexical and grammatical sets known as English, Mandarin, Russian or some 3,000 other tongues. The mother language is acquired at the beginning from parents and other family members as well as the surrounding social milieu. Initial learning takes place by correlating physical objects, actions and expressions with specific sounds. Additional languages can be learned in the same way or through more structured activities that include also correlating sounds in the target language with sounds in the mother language. Subsequent learning, not only increases vocabulary but also the precision of expression and the skills of communication. Individuals also learn to use different types of language for different purposes.

The School of the Nations provides for the development of language primarily in English and Mandarin. English is the primary language of instruction and enables the individual to access knowledge world-wide and interact with a significant percentage of people from all the nations of the world. It is also the expectation of the parents for their children to gain proficiency in English through the education programmes in the school. Mandarin enables the students to function throughout China, a region of growing economic, political and social importance and influence.

Proficiency and familiarity with different languages is recognized as an important element in the development of a sense of world citizenship and international mindedness. Language is a window on the world and different languages provide different windows. A knowledge of different languages opens the mind to different points of view and different ways of understanding.



2 LANGUAGE PROFILE

Students entering the IB diploma programme come from the following backgrounds:

- Cantonese speaking families who have provide opportunities to the student to acquire English to an adequate degree as ascertained through examination.
- English speaking families from North American, British, Australian or New Zealand background who have developed their language ability through the school systems associated with these countries and may or may not have knowledge of or proficiency in another language
- English speaking families from countries such as India, Philippines, Singapore or Malaysia who have developed their English language abilities in the school systems of these countries and also have knowledge of one or more additional languages learned in the home.
- Mandarin speaking families who have provide opportunities to the student to acquire English to an adequate degree as ascertained through examination.
- Families with other home languages who have provide opportunities to the student to acquire English to an adequate degree as ascertained through examination.



3 LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

3.1 IB Language Courses

The IB programme at the School of the Nations will use English as the language of instruction. As a general rule students accepted to the IB diploma programme will have demonstrated adequate proficiency in English either through an admissions examination (see admissions policy) or through previous study at the School of the Nations. The School provides learning support in the library in the afternoons for various subjects including English and Chinese for students.

The majority of students will be learning in a language other than their mother tongue. For this reason the curriculum of all subjects will take into account the fact that students may not naturally understand the language used. When necessary, explicit instruction will be provided to familiarize students with the subtleties of meaning, range of expression and structural forms appropriate for different subjects and purposes. This will occur either in the instruction of Language A or Language B classes or in the respective subject class.

3.1.1 Language A

All students have to take English as their first language. In some cases students may choose to study both English and their mother tongue as their Language A course. The study of another Language A course is subjected to approval of the School and must comply with all rules and guidance from the IBO.

Approval of each student's choice will be based on

- prior experience with the student at lower levels of instruction at the School of the Nations
- entrance examination at the time of enrolment.
- educational background
- family background

The school assists students who choose their mother tongue as an additional Language A course to find appropriate academic assistance. If the student chooses Chinese as his/her additional Language A subject, the class will be conducted within the school hours. The school will encourage students of linguistic backgrounds other than English or Chinese to find opportunities for self-study of Language A: Literature in their mother tongue if so desired. The student's family must provide a qualified tutor officially for this course option. The school is able to provide the following logistical support if needed:

- printing/ photocopying services
- pre-arranged classroom/ meeting room
- suggestion on tutor's training and workshops
- administering major assessments

3.1.2 Language B (HL, SL & *ab initio*)

Students who take English as the only language A course are required to choose Mandarin, French or Spanish for the Language B component of the curriculum. The school will provide instruction in Mandarin and will assist students to find appropriate academic support for other languages. The School provides Site-based Coordinator of IB approved online Language B course. Approval of each student's choice will be based on



- prior experience with the student at lower levels of instruction at the School of the Nations
- entrance examination at the time of enrolment.
- educational background
- family background
- student motivation and attitude towards independent learning

3.1.3 Mandarin *ab initio*

Students who are unable to pursue Mandarin as their Language B course will be required to study it at the *ab initio* level. The growing importance and influence of China in the region and the world fully justifies the emphasis placed on Mandarin at the school.

In addition the school will assist all students to study other languages according to their needs and desires. There are a number of organizations in Macau that are useful for this purpose as specified in the next section.

3.2 English Language Learning and English Language Learners

With the expectation of the families and specific design of the programme before the students enter the Diploma Programme. The demand for English language support is not as high as in the past since about year 2015. However, the following supports/arrangements are available for student leaning:

- the requirement on every DP teachers is a language teacher who guides and trains students to be proficient in using the language of the subject area stands strong as one of the key pedagogical elements.
- students may request for occasional support from subject teachers
- students may use the library study support on a regular basis
- the school sets up periodic training for all teaching staff on strategies in student language support, e.g. Teaching ESL students in Mainstream Classrooms



4 COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

The School of the Nations regularly communicates with parents and also encourages parents to initiate communication with teachers and administrators. Written communication is carried out mainly in English and important matters are translated into Chinese. Oral communication with parent happens in English, Mandarin or Cantonese regularly. Staff is available for translation from English to Mandarin or Cantonese and from Mandarin to English.

5 COMMUNICATION WITH ACADEMIC STAFF

Teachers at the School of the Nations are proficient in English, Mandarin, Cantonese or any combination of these. There are a certain number of staff members who do not share a common language. Written communications from the administration are provided in English and translated into Chinese in written or oral formats. Translation is provided for oral communication between staff members. The School is consistently seeking improvement in reducing the language barrier between its staff members.