

# Preliminary Language Policy

## Deutsche Schule Hurghada - Red Sea

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November 2016

### 1 Mission statement

In terms of the IB's mission to enable young people to contribute to making the world a better and more peaceful<sup>1</sup> place, the DSH - being a school where naturally a large number of different nationalities, different cultures and different religions meet - has set as its goal the forming of open-minded, tolerant, independent, communicative and strong personalities. The acquisition and application of (foreign) languages as well as a positive attitude to language learning during the school career and after that, meaning a life-long language learning competence, are some of the essential keys to develop new realities, gain new perspectives and cultural competence.

### 2 Language acquisition at DSH

Most of our students come from German, Egyptian or mixed families and therefore have at least one of the two languages German and Arabic as their mother tongue, mostly German. The acquisition of the prevailing other language however starts at the latest in the day-nursery, the kindergarten and the preschool, all included in DSH, in which children are being looked after by both Arabic and German speaking teachers. Therefore, even students that have other popular mother tongues like Russian or Italian already have remarkable speaking skills in both languages German and Arabic when they hit primary school, in which every student starts to learn English in Year 1.

Consequently from Year 1 until at least the end of Year 10, every student is taking **German** (literature) lessons, **Arabic** lessons (literature or foreign language) as well as **English** lessons (foreign language). The school does not only offer the German syllabus. Parents have the possibility of registering their children for *the Egyptian syllabus*, in which case several subjects of the German syllabus like Politics or History are replaced by Egyptian equivalents and are being held by Egyptian teachers in Arabic. In addition to that, from Year 6 until at least Year 10 on, every student is taking **French** lessons, being for a lot of students the third or even fourth foreign language they learn.

Apart from this the subjects PE and chemistry are being taught in English.

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<sup>1</sup> *Language B Guide. First examinations 2015.* International Baccalaureate Organization. Geneva 2013.

Finally, during the IB DP in Years 11 and 12, students are being assessed in German literature as their language A subject and English as their language B subject on higher level. Further, they have the choice between French and Arabic as their second language B subject on standard level. Students who simultaneously follow the Egyptian syllabus take additional lessons in Arabic literature, history, politics and religious studies that are not being assessed as a part of the IB DP. Language learning in the IB Diploma Program will be discussed in more detail below.

### 3 Language application in and outside school

As mentioned, some subjects like PE and chemistry are taught in English thus giving students the opportunity to apply their acquired language capacities in another, more informal context than the English lesson.

Another fertile opportunity for the students to gain language competence is the time students spend in school but outside the classrooms for example on the school yard during the breaks or before and after school. Here no restrictions are placed on the diverse application of all the languages that are present at DSH, no matter if it is with the classmates on the soccer yard, on the playground or in interaction with teachers, members of the administration or with the employees of the kitchen and the housekeeping.

The city of Hurghada and especially the district in which the school is located consists mostly of hotels, resorts, compounds, restaurants, malls and stores in which not only tourists, but also European residents and a lot of foreigners working for example in water sports or travelling organizations stay or live. Also, in combination with the fact, that a lot of our students' parents are professionally involved in hotels, diving schools and other touristic centers, Hurghada provides everywhere outside the house all the time an enormous number of diverse opportunities to apply a foreign language.

Unfortunately, school exchanges with schools in other countries as a rule are not practicable as most students have the Egyptian nationality, which makes it difficult to leave the country, especially to Europe. But instead a "small school exchange" in cooperation with the French School of Hurghada is nascent.

### 4 Language learning in the IB Diploma Program

All four of the languages taught during Years 1 to 10 can be studied in the IB Diploma Program. As **German** is the mother tongue for the majority of our students (especially the ones who will start the DP in 2017) and in any case learned and spoken since at least the kindergarten, it will be offered for studies in language and literature (Language A). Further, students that simultaneously follow the Egyptian syllable in order to graduate from the national Egyptian baccalaureate as well continue Arabic studies in language and literature, which will not be a part of the International Baccalaureate.

**English** being taught since Year 1 will be offered at higher level (Language B HL). Furthermore, students can choose between **French** and **Arabic** offered at standard level (Language B SL). Consequently, IB students will study two foreign languages within the framework of the IB Diploma Program.

In accordance to the IB's mission statement and the aims of group 1 and 2 the **following goals** are pursued within the acquisition and application of the offered languages<sup>2</sup>:

1. The DSH curricula of group 1 and 2 aim to “develop students’ **intercultural understanding**”<sup>3</sup> and intercultural competence. Therefore students will be given the opportunity not only to gain sociocultural knowledge about different cultures and the concept of a culture itself but also to learn how to behave and to interact in a multicultural context. An “awareness and appreciation of the different perspectives of people from other cultures”<sup>4</sup> can be gained amongst other things “through the study of texts and through social interaction”<sup>5</sup>.
2. Language **acquisition** being the main purpose of the **language B** program, students will be enabled to “understand and use the language they have studied in a range of contexts and for a variety of purposes”.<sup>6</sup> Students shall develop their language competences further, such as
  - communicative skills<sup>7</sup>:
    - **listening (and viewing) comprehension**: understand, analyze and respond to a range of spoken texts
    - **reading comprehension**: understand, analyze and respond to a range of written texts; understand and use works of literature written in the target language (only HL) (assessed)
    - **interactive speaking**: communicate clearly and effectively in a range of situations, use language to express and respond to a range of ideas with accuracy and fluency, appropriate to the context (assessed)
    - **writing**: produce a certain range of texts, appropriate to the interpersonal and cultural context; organize ideas on a range of topics in a clear coherent and convincing manner (only HL) (assessed)
    - **mediation**: understand texts and convey content in own words in another language
  - linguistic competences:
    - vocabulary
    - grammar
  - text handling
    - know, recognize and produce typical kinds of texts
    - understand the formal and stylistic qualities of a text

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<sup>2</sup> *Language B Guide. First examinations 2015*. International Baccalaureate Organization. Geneva 2013.

<sup>3</sup> quot. ibid. p.9

<sup>4</sup> quot. ibid. p.9

<sup>5</sup> quot. ibid. p.9

<sup>6</sup> quot. ibid. p.9

<sup>7</sup> ibid. p.9-10

3. Furthermore, the divers **application** of the studied language as well as of the gained intercultural competences is not only desirable but necessary. In order to achieve that goal, it is essential for the IB teachers to provide divers more or less realistic occasions to actually use the studied language spoken and written. Amongst other things, connections to other IB DP groups and subjects such as CAS or Sciences will be encouraged and can play an important role in creating for example the above mentioned social interactions not only in language classes.
4. Students shall be encouraged to develop an **awareness of the role of language** in relation to other areas of knowledge, the relationship between the languages and cultures the and most importantly the role of language.
5. An appreciation of foreign languages, an enjoyment and **life-long interest in language learning** shall be promoted.

German being the mother tongue of the majority of our students and therefore language for studies in language and literature (**language A**), the following additional aims are to be postulated<sup>8</sup>:

- develop the students' understanding of the importance of context of time, sender and recipient in the perception of a text
- develop in students an understanding of how language, culture and context determine the ways in which **meaning is constructed** in texts
- develop in students the ability to engage in **close, detailed analysis** of individual texts and make relevant connections
- encourage students to understand and appreciate the formal, stylistic and aesthetic qualities of a text
- develop the students' powers of expression, both in oral and written communication

## 5 Variety of mother tongues at DSH

The first and the second class students to graduate from the IB DP all have German as (one of) their mother tongue(s). However, the eventual situation of students participating in the IB DP who are not German native speakers is to be considered. As for those amongst these students who joined the DSH before at least Year 3 have more than 7 years of language practice in German and therefore should have been able to develop their basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) as well as their cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP)<sup>9</sup>. Nevertheless, IB teachers are demanded to be

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<sup>8</sup> *Language A: Language and Literature Guide. First Examinations 2015*. International Baccalaureate Organization. Geneva 2011.

<sup>9</sup> *Learning in a Language Other than Mother Tongue in IB Programmes*. International Baccalaureate Organization. Geneva 2008.

aware of the slightly different conditions for learning for these students as described in detail in the guide for *Learning in a Language Other than Mother Tongue in IB Programmes (2008)*.

Although Deutsche Schule Hurghada is a small school, due to the circumstances, there is a considerable variety of common as well as exotic (second) mother tongues such as German, Swiss German, Austrian German, Arabic, Russian, Lithuanian, Italian, French, Spanish and Dutch spread over Years 1 to 12, the kindergarten as well as the teachers room and the parents community. This variety shall be appreciated and promoted not only by the IB teachers in any possible way as a priceless source of occasions and opportunities for interpersonal and intercultural understanding and interaction, in other words for a slow but constant and sustainable development of inquiring, knowledgeable and especially open-minded and communicative “young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect”<sup>10</sup>.

## 6 Resources

*Guidelines for Developing a School Language Policy*. International Baccalaureate Organization. Geneva 2008.

*Language B Guide. First examinations 2015*. International Baccalaureate Organization. Geneva 2013.

*Language A: Language and Literature Guide. First Examinations 2015*. International Baccalaureate Organization. Geneva 2011.

*Learning in a Language Other than Mother Tongue in IB Programmes*. International Baccalaureate Organization. Geneva 2008.

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<sup>10</sup> *Guidelines for Developing a School Language Policy*. International Baccalaureate Organization. Geneva 2008.