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## Language Policy

### MISSION STATEMENT

ESI Kindergarten aims to cultivate all students to be lifelong learners and responsible global citizens by providing an inquiring and challenging environment.

### PURPOSE OF THE LANGUAGE POLICY

This language policy is a working document developed by staff and administration of the Eternal Sea International Kindergarten. The policy is consistent with the stipulated principles and practices of the IB. This document outlines our school's linguistic and academic goals and defines the programme designed to help our students attain these goals. This policy is intended to provide an overview and guiding principles for language learning at ESI which permeates the entire school curriculum through authentic contexts in a culturally rich and diverse environment.

### PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Language is used as a means to facilitate communication across the barriers of culture. People have a desire to interact with each other through language, which is fundamental in the preservation of cultural identity and the understanding between different nations and cultures. At ESI Kindergarten we encourage the students to value, appreciate and enjoy using language through listening, reading, writing and speaking as a vehicle for further academic growth. ESI implements a 80/20 dual language programme, with 80% of instructional time in English, while the other 20% is in Mandarin. This model addresses our community's desire for children to be learning in an English immersion environment for much of their time at school, while still supporting and valuing the mother tongue of the majority of ESI students. For this reason. Language is perceived as a vital tool for learning and developing through simulating active thinking, knowledge acquisition and communication. Since language development is an ongoing process, thus



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all teachers are required to see themselves and act as language teachers.

**ESI Kindergarten is committed to the following practices:**

- Young students learn by doing. They construct and acquire knowledge through playful interactions with the physical and social world.
- Students are motivated to learn by their desire to make sense of the fascinating world around them; their primary mode of learning is play.
- Each student is unique. Students differ in their cultural, socioeconomic and linguistic backgrounds. Differences in abilities, maturation, and learning style occur in the areas of physical, cognitive, social, and emotional growth.
- Students are involved in discovery learning, and are expected to be physically and mentally active. Creativity and problem-solving are encouraged.
- Through a program of inquiry we enable students to view their world with understanding, sensitivity and fairness.
- Eternal Sea is committed to early childhood education in a multi-cultural atmosphere so that students can naturally integrate into the international environment.
- The school places importance on language learning, including mother tongue, official language (English) and other languages.
- Teaching and learning addresses the diversity of student language needs, including those for students learning a language(s) other than their mother tongue.
- Assessment at the school aligns with the requirements of the programme.
- Collaborative planning and reflection recognizes that all teachers are responsible for language development of students.
- The school utilizes the resources and expertise of the community to enhance learning within the programme.

## **PEDAGOGY**

**All teachers are teachers of language.**

All ESI teachers are language teachers. They understand that language instruction is an integral part of teaching in all subject areas and at all grade levels. They teach language for learning by:

- acquiring understanding of the processes of language learning.
- integrating language instruction with content instruction.
- differentiating teaching and learning strategies to meet individual students' language for learning needs.
- by collaborating with colleagues in the implementation of effective language for



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learning strategies.

**In practice this means that teachers use strategies such as the following:**

- Model different reading and writing strategies and effective language use
- Demonstrate how to speak and listen effectively in various situations
- Foster a variety of communication opportunities and types
- Teach vocabulary and language skills related to their subject
- Assist students to understand and follow instructions
- Plan and use language in a variety of contexts
- Emphasize communication of ideas
- Use positive reinforcement and comments to encourage students
- Allow for a wide range of language competencies and development
- Provide hands-on activities with related language activities
- Use student partners to assist language development
- Use collaborative activities
- Provide opportunities for oral presentations on a regular basis
- Have an awareness of alternative language structures within English and Chinese
- Encourage students to demonstrate open dialogue in all interactions to understand the world through different lenses
- Assist students to follow directions within and across disciplines
- Encourage a willingness to take language risks in different group settings by having students use, experiment with, and learn language
- Offer ample opportunity for oral reading, oral presentations, role plays, and songs
- Offer ample opportunity for discussions, debate, and the expression of different viewpoints
- Provide opportunities for students to make choices with language activities and to improve through practice
- Use a range of teaching resources including audio and video, games and artifacts
- Keep records of student discussions
- Display student and teacher questions
- Involve students in assessing their own language development through portfolios, rubrics, self reflections and conferencing, to encourage self assessment
- Provide concrete materials first, then introduce the associated language
- Use appropriate language in theme based groups
- Model language for expression in speaking, spelling and reading
- Evaluate language skills of students in their class
- Adapt classroom and lesson materials for EAL learners



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## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As it is an expectation for all teachers to be language teachers, on-going training focused on integrated language instruction will be offered throughout the year. The school is committed to providing embedded professional development for language learning across the curriculum. The academic department ensures that staff receives on-going professional development opportunities and monitors that strategies are successfully implemented. Teachers will take part in in-school workshops held by IBO, attend workshops off campus held by the IBO, workshops held within the staff regarding various topics that promote the PYP framework, language workshops, and teachers are supported in their efforts for further self-initiated training and degree completion.

## PARENTS AND COMMUNITY

**All members of the school community are learners of language.**

All members of the ESI community, teachers, students, staff, and parents are encouraged to develop both English and Chinese.

- ESI teachers involve parents in the linguistic and academic development of their children and encourage them to learn language with their children.
- All members of the community recognize that language learning is a lifelong process.
- All students, teachers, staff and parents are encouraged to reflect upon language learning.
- The school will provide language learning opportunities, such as access to language classes, where appropriate.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE

English is the language of instruction and students are given adequate opportunities to maintain and develop their mother tongue at ESI kindergarten. To facilitate the most productive English language learning environment, and to help create a sense of harmony and unity, the use of English is encouraged throughout the school to the most practicable extent.



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## School Practices in Language Learning

- All students receive instruction in English in every subject area except Mandarin.
- Students are encouraged to use any and all language resources available to make sense of their learning (translanguaging), with the end goal of students being able to process and communicate their knowledge and understandings in English.
- Formative assessment is employed to ensure student progress and inform practice.
- All new students have pre-assessment about their English competence.
- All new families complete a Survey to inform the languages used at home.
- All teachers are suitably qualified and experienced.
- Teaching groups are revised and adjusted as necessary to best meet the needs of the students.
- In recruiting teachers, preference is given to those with previous experience of living overseas.
- The Library includes books in English, Mandarin and other languages.
- All the students have regular Library time.
- Plays and other events are staged which give students the opportunity to perform in English.
- When necessary, translation services are provided for parents who cannot speak English.
- Key documents exist in Mandarin as well as English.
- Parents are well informed of the school Language Policy.
- Explicitly activate learners' prior understanding using the mother tongue if appropriate.
- Use their knowledge of learners' prior understanding to differentiate tasks and activities that will build up the further background knowledge necessary for new learning to occur.
- Record information in learner profiles that will support planning for future differentiation.
- Consider the time and strategies necessary for activating and building up background knowledge when planning a unit of work or lesson.
- Use variety of specific ways to help learners understand language. Examples of these are:
  - visual aids
  - graphic organizers
  - demonstrations
  - dramatization
  - small, structured collaborative groups
  - teacher language



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- Learning about language such as Phonics and Reading A to Z are also valuable scaffolding strategies that give learners access to a rich diversity of sophisticated texts.
- Language is integral to identity, and can be connected to a person's relationship with the world and how they come to feel about that world.

## MOTHER TONGUE SUPPORT

We acknowledge the importance of a student's Mother Tongue in promoting personal identity and maintaining cultural heritage. We offer support for the preservation and development of a student's mother tongue by

- Using teacher mentors who speak the same mother tongue as often as possible.
- Providing school signage in mother tongues as often as possible.
- Encouraging students to speak their mother tongue in informal situations.
- Advising families on arrangements for mother tongue support outside of school.

## AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITY PROGRAM

ESI Kindergarten offers a Spanish Program as an Extra-curriculum Activity (ECA), contingent on the needs of specific groups within the school community.

## HOW AND WHO WILL REVISE THE LANGUAGE POLICY

The Leadership, Pedagogical leadership, PYP coordinator, teachers, and school community will review the ESI Language Policy annually. Revisions will be made by the Pedagogical Leadership Team based on feedback received from the review.

## RESOURCES

*Making the PYP Happen: A curriculum framework for international primary education. December 2009. Cardiff, UK. International Baccalaureate.*