

EXUPERY INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL LANGUAGE POLICY

EIS Guiding Statements

Guided by the ideals of the United Nations, and as an IB World School, Exupery International School provides a caring and challenging learning environment which fosters international mindedness and **multilingualism**. We inspire our students to become creative, resilient, and responsible citizens, who will thrive and be happy within our ever-changing technological world.

Background

The vast majority of our students are native speakers of Latvian or Russian. Current Latvian Legislation requires that students in all schools complete a course in Latvian Language, History and Culture; this is expected to continue with the introduction of the new legislation. Currently students study both French and English as the language of instruction and play within the pre-school.

Purpose

The aim of this policy is to describe the pathways we will undertake, the support for language learning, and the rationale for the decisions we have taken with respect to languages within the school.

Our Languages Aim

The aim is for students to become highly proficient in at least two languages, so that if a student undertakes the IBDP programme they will have the opportunity of being awarded a bilingual diploma. They should also have the opportunity to student a third language so that they will learn about the history and culture associated with this language, while being able to communicate verbally.

Introduction

The language program at EIS is designed to support the Guiding Statements of the school by serving an international community, supporting four languages and providing strong mother tongue assistance for our students at the same time. The primary languages of instruction in the preschool is French and English. The primary language in the primary, middle and senior school is English. As a school focused on multilingualing, we highly value the importance of each child's mother tongue and home language. We support this by allowing our students to process information in their mother tongue, thus building the important skills across various languages and creating a strong cognitive base, so that they can apply this at any point in their lives and in any language.

At EIS, students not only learn languages but more importantly they learn through languages and about them in an environment where they are actively engaged in inquiry and problem-solving process, learning to question, thinking critically and creatively, making meaning and taking responsibility of their

learning, reflecting, building their theory of knowledge and creating lasting connections to real life. Students learn not only languages at EIS but also through being creative storytellers themselves and having inspiring teachers. Since language is fundamental factor to learning, all teachers are, in practice, language teachers and storytellers.

Our school’s core learning outcomes promote an environment where language acquisition permeates the curriculum. Therefore, teaching and learning languages is integrated within all subjects and units. As an international school, we strive to provide a multicultural educational environment to EIS students in becoming active, internationally-minded and responsible citizens.

Keeping in mind that most of our students are not English native speakers, we support the English language across the whole school through our EAL department during the lessons and in collaboration with subject teachers and SEN department, when needed. By using this approach and providing a unique staffing model where English speakers work together with local teachers, we aim to achieve excellence across language acquisition.

We believe that languages are best acquired in the environment that promotes them. Therefore, we integrate these opportunities in the curriculum from pre-school all the way to secondary school. We provide school wide mother tongue support for Latvian, Russian and French. Moreover, we support the acquisition of these languages, as second and third choice.

Language Acquisition at EIS

Preschool:

Our **Pre-School** years start from the age of two and a half, and the languages of instruction are English and French. Over the course of the 3 years in Preschool our students are also beginning to get exposed also to the Latvian Language via activities. This study of the local language, history and culture is intended to ensure that our students develop a sense of identity with Latvia.

“...The quality of a MOTHER TONGUE or native language fluency impacts the quality of subsequent language ...” (Tokuhamas-Espinosa, as cited in Multilingual Living, 2008).

As per the quotation above we also recognize that our students also need to develop their mother tongue so they will not only be able to learn new languages but also so that they have the vocabulary and cognition to think deeply, reflective and creatively. With this in mind we also provide opportunities for students in the preschool to take mother tongue lessons in both Russian and Latvian.

Kindergarten			
Age	3	4	5
EIS	K1	K2	K3

Fig 1: Ages and Names of Kindergarten Classes

Pre School K1	French		English		Mother Tongue Lessons	
	Latvian Activities		Pre School K3		French	English
	Latvian Activities		Pre School K3		Latvian Activities	

Learning is done through playful interactions in small groups, where each child is cared for, looked after and valued. At this stage, students can also benefit from EAL assistance in order to improve the English level. This involves understanding and reproducing sounds, basic handwriting (writing one's own name) and letter recognition. We aim to ignite curiosity and spark imagination at this very precious early age.

Primary school:

In **Primary** school, students follow the IB PYP program which is run purely in English and structured to help students develop the key skills needed for their future development and learning. In Grades 1 and 2 students at EIS learn the D'Nealian Manuscript to facilitate consistency in using it. From Grade 3 onwards students learn to blend letters and transition to cursive writing.

Furthermore, students in Primary start following the Writer's Workshop and learn literacy from the **Fountas and Pinnell** program. In this developmental stage students are supported in class or through pull-outs when necessary by our EAL teachers and in certain cases a specific learning program can be put together to assist the students who are in immediate need of language improvement. Here, all language departments, together with our SEN and speech therapist work together to make learning easy, fun and beneficial.

At this learning stage the other languages (Latvian, Russian and French) are transitioning into split levels per Grade. Latvian nationals follow Latvian language acquisition program provided by EIS teachers, in order to prepare them for the state exam in Grade 12, whereas, non-Latvian nationals acquire it as a second language following a revised curriculum. Students who are non-Latvian nationals are encouraged to take the Latvian language test as well.

Moreover, students are tested using the Oxford English level test at least twice a year to determine their English language levels and progression, that allows for a better language support.

Middle school:

In **Middle School** students start getting ready for their English language exams and follow the Cambridge Language and Literature program by learning to understand prose, poetry, novels, text structure and analysis. English Language acquisition is incorporated in the lessons and extra support is offered to students who need to improve a specific area of English. This is offered through EAL pull-outs or push-ins, where applicable.

Students prepare to take IGCSE exams in Language and Literature, as well as English as a Second Language alongside getting ready for the state required language placement tests in Latvian and English, that take place in Grade 9. This focus on the Latvian examinations will likely change with the new legislation, at which time there will be a greater focus on English and the students mother tongue.

In Middle School students gradually focus on just three languages, where one is English, the other their mother tongue and Latvian, Russian or French. The expectation is that the third language will be as an additional language and thus students will study this language less frequently in comparison with the other two.

Secondary school:

In **Secondary School**¹ students are preparing towards gaining A/AS Levels and towards taking IBDP, whilst acquiring a bilingual diploma from EIS. Students at EIS have the possibility to graduate being highly proficient in two of their chosen languages and complete exams in the other chosen language alongside English.

Furthermore, Latvian nationals and non-Latvian students at EIS can choose to take the Latvian state exam in Grade 12, if they are aiming to enter a university in Latvia.²

Storytelling is a big part of EIS and is encouraged throughout all grades and age levels. Students learn to discuss, tell, write and create creative stories and share them across a wide range of sources, at school, with parents and their friends. We have many literary events going through the year that embody the message of our inspiration for storytelling, Exupéry himself. Students in middle school are encouraged to participate in national and international poetry events, NaNoWriMo and other literary events.

EIS Language Proficiency Framework (Expectations)

EIS Language Proficiency Framework is based on Common European Framework of Reference for Languages https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/source/framework_en.pdf and Guide for the Development and Implementation of Curricula for Plurilingual and International Education <https://rm.coe.int/guide-for-the-development-and-implementation-of-curricula-for-plurilin/1680702437>

EIS Expectations for target languages from Primary to Secondary school are shown in the table below.

Language levels may differ for:

- Comprehension
- Creation

At EIS the target levels are for "Creation". The level of "comprehension" may exceed the target level of creation.

Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Target (after Grade 12)
English*	0/ A1	A1	A1	A2	A2	B1	B1	B2	B2	C1
Mother tongue**	A2	A2	B1	B1	B2	B2	B2	C1	C1	C1
FL1**	0/ A1	A1	A1	A1	A2	A2	A2	B1	B1	B2
FL2**	0/ A1	A1	A1	A1	A1	A2	A2	A2	A2	B1

* This is the language of instruction. Language support is provided if the student has just enrolled, and throughout the educational process if difficulties in language acquisition arise.

¹ In Latvia the last two years of school are referred to as secondary, i.e. when students are between 17 and 19 years old.

² The legislation for international schools in Latvia is changing and thus parents and students will be informed of the changes. However, we expect that the changes will be positive for our students in this regard.

** Students will acquire the language in the mixed-age groups according to their initial level of language, and may be transferred to upper-level groups in accordance with their progress.

Essential agreement about English Language Acquisition at EIS

The acquisition of English is a core component of EIS curriculum, as the language has a role of the medium and influences students' inclusion in the school community, general understanding of the themes and subject areas, activity and productivity in the lessons and school events. It makes English a subject of special attention at EIS. The set of expectations for English acquisition is described below.

EIS students acquire English as a language

- Through various subjects, as means of main language of content acquisition.
- In language and literature classes.
- As a medium of communication in school everyday life and events.

Core principles for EIS in English language acquisition

- EIS supports multilingual approach throughout the school, based around the latest research in the field of Bilingualism and Translanguaging (Garcia, O., & Lin, A. M. Y. (2016)). This allows for the students to strengthen their cognitive skills, understand the content, connect learned topics and newly acquired information/vocabulary across two or more languages.
- In every teaching event (lesson, project, extracurricular activity, etc.) there are specific goals for both the subject area and the language.
- The lessons of EAL serve as support time to acquire the concepts and vocabulary of other subjects and in English. Thus, English teachers' cooperation with the specialist teachers is an essential tool for academic progress.
- The procedures that foster students' enquiry (morning circles and Homeroom times, Learner Profile components, DEAR, etc.) are integrated in English language program.³

Common components to facilitate convergence between the languages

It is important for students to incorporate the principle of convergence in all languages they learn at school. Language teachers (English, Latvian, Russian, French/other) mutually agree to regularly use the following principles in their daily work:

- Communicative approach in language acquisition and linguistic reflexivity. Linguistic reflexivity means supporting learners' intuition concerning the way in which languages work.
- Building students' understanding about the norms and variation in languages.
- The development of cross-linkages calls to utilize the similarity and dissimilarity between languages.
- Striving to establish the points of convergence and encouraging cross-cutting links between all languages taught at school. The teacher planning time includes common discourse meetings with other language teachers. The language teachers are expected to plan thematic and language-related program components together to promote convergence in all languages (e.g. similar

³ DEAR = Drop Everything and Read, in which teachers read to students in homeroom times while students follow the words on the screen or in hardcopy text.

grammar structures in foreign languages are acquired at the same time, the comparison between grammar issues in a foreign language and mother tongue is provided).

- Using a variety of textual genres in all subjects.
- Intercultural education makes sure that EIS students are not only learning languages but also the culture, literary works and cross-cultural connections.
- We strive to support learners' extensive reading in school individually, together with a teacher, reading in roles, discourse and discussions, debates, book-crossing events, inviting book authors to lessons etc.; and at home – individually, with parents and friends.

Final provision

This document comes into force from the moment of signing.

School Director

Dmitrijs Vinogradovs

Notes:

- This policy is linked to the policy on [International Mindedness](#)
- Please see [Presentation on Languages](#) for more complete details on language pathways.