

**International
Maarif Schools
Erbil**



IB Language Policy

(Last update 24 June, 2024)

IB Mission Statement

“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.”

International Maarif Schools of Erbil Vision and Mission

International Maarif Schools of Erbil aims to foster a lifelong commitment to intellectual curiosity and to raise children as self-reliant, responsible individuals endowed with critical thinking.

In light of the 21st century’s requirements for knowledge and skills and pursuing the aim to bring up “people of goodwill,” the goals of our schools are:

- To educate our students as successful individuals at national and international levels who read, research, think analytically, innovatively, and produce added value.
- To ensure that our students will be entrepreneurial individuals with a sense of responsibility, respect for their environment and other living beings, a developed sense of social work, and an inclination to teamwork.
- To equip our students with the knowledge, skills, and academic qualifications of the positivist sciences to enable them to gain a scientific perspective.
- To develop our students’ knowledge in social sciences, direct them, think about national and international issues, and produce proposals for possible solutions.
- To equip our students with communication skills that will enable them to effectively use their mother tongue and multiple foreign languages.
- Beyond the fact that our students are technologically literate, educating them as individuals who consume and produce technology is essential.
- To enable our students to develop themselves in different areas of sports and art in the direction of their interests and abilities.
- Besides the affinity to the cultural values of their society, to ensure that our students gain the ability to coexist with different cultures.

IB learner profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

As IB learners we strive to be:	
Inquiries: We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.	Open-minded: We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.
Knowledgeable: We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.	Caring: We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and the world around us.
Thinker: We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.	Risk-taker: We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.
Communicator: We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.	Balanced: We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intellectual, physical, and emotional—to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.
Principled: We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.	Reflective: We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

Introduction

At IMSE, our language policy serves as a comprehensive guide to align our school's actions with the International Baccalaureate's (IB) principles of multilingualism and linguistic access. We recognize the vital role of multilingualism in fostering intercultural understanding and promoting a globally-minded outlook, espoused by the IB. This policy outlines our current language landscape, and outlines the measures we have implemented to provide all students with equal linguistic opportunities, including the support of their mother tongues and the language of instruction. By adhering to this policy, we strive to create an inclusive and multilingual learning environment for all students at IMSE.

Language Philosophy

At IMSE, our beliefs about the use of language are centered around its dynamic and empowering role in our lives. We hold the following principles to be true:

1. Language is a product of social and cultural interactions, shaped by the relationships and interactions we have with others.
2. Language is a powerful tool for communication and personal expression, allowing us to convey our thoughts, feelings, and experiences to others, and to make sense of the world around us.
3. Language acquisition is a unique journey for each individual, with students progressing at their own pace.
4. Nurturing bilingualism among our students enhances their personal, social, and cultural growth, while promoting international-mindedness.
5. By embracing these principles, we strive to create a supportive language learning environment that fosters each student's personal growth and success."

At IMSE, we believe that language learning is most effective when:

1. It is integrated with other subjects and taught in relevant and engaging contexts.
2. Inquiry-based approaches are used to foster student-driven language development.
3. Language instruction encompasses the acquisition of language skills, attitudes, and understanding of linguistic conventions.
4. The various language strands, including listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, and presenting, are taught in an interactive and collaborative manner.
5. Individual differences in developmental stages and learning styles are considered and accommodated.
6. All teachers in our school understand their role as language teachers, recognizing that language permeates all subjects in the curriculum.
7. The development of each student's mother tongue is valued and supported, as it is crucial to language acquisition, literacy, self-esteem, and identity formation."

Languages at IMSE

At IMSE, we view communication as a combination of receptive, productive, and interactive skills, each serving a specific purpose. Whether seeking to convey information, narrate a story, persuade others, or promote a product or idea, our communication is shaped by a multitude of factors,

including our emotional state, prior experiences, context, and the individuals with whom we are communicating. Recognizing the dynamic nature of communication, we strive to create a comprehensive language learning environment that prepares our students to effectively communicate in a variety of settings.

A. Taught Languages

- . **English:** English is the primary language of instruction at IMSE, serving as MYP and DP Language A. All subjects, excluding language classes, are taught in English.
- . **Turkish:** Turkish is the additional language taught at IMSE, serving as MYP Language B, DP Language A (Literature). Students begin learning Turkish from KG1, and from grade 6 onwards, they are streamed into higher or lower ability Turkish language courses.
- . **Kurdish:** Kurdish is the local language of Kurdistan, and students are exposed to it starting from kindergarten, as per the requirements of the Ministry of Education.
- . **Arabic:** Arabic, being the primary language outside of Kurdistan, is taught starting from grade 4 as per the Ministry of Education requirements.

B. Communicating with Students

The main languages of communication in the school are English and Turkish. Classes taught in English and additional languages are differentiated. Teachers may use other languages in specific situations to promote student involvement, understanding, and health and safety, but there should not be an over-reliance on translation. The level of translation needed should ensure that students are challenged but not frustrated, and their health and safety is not compromised. (For more detail, see Mother Tongue Support, below).

C. Communicating with Parents

Parent information sessions are presented in at least four languages: English, Turkish, Kurdish, and Arabic, either in oral or written form. Parent newsletters and reports are translated into Kurdish and Turkish, and the letter sent to the parents will depend on their preferred language. Parent-teacher meetings are supported by translation into the most comfortable language for the parent. School signs will be in English, and Turkish and Kurdish may be added as visual languages wherever possible.

D. Communicating with Staff

The school will communicate with staff in English, and accepts English language conventions used in any anglophone country.

Curriculum

A. Written Curriculum

Our language curriculum is designed to align with the latest language policy requirements set by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). Our language **scope and sequence** take into consideration the various stages of language learning and acknowledges that students within the same class may be at different stages of language development. Furthermore, additional language classes are also taught using the language scope and sequence to ensure consistency and coherence in language instruction.

PYP: In the Primary Years Program (PYP), the language scope and sequence are supplemented by yearly English language and literacy objectives, which are selected by the PYP Coordinator in collaboration with teachers and documented in Unit of Inquiry planners and year plans. Our units are designed to incorporate a range of diverse language and literacy resources to meet the needs of all students.

MYP: In the Middle Years Program (MYP), students are divided into leveled classes for Language A (English) and Language B (Turkish). Teachers of different levels plan units together to ensure that all students are appropriately challenged, and all content area teachers incorporate English language objectives in their unit planners.

DP: Language A (English and Turkish), Arabic B and Arabic ab initio teachers are developing the two-year course outline aligned with the requirements of IB syllabi. Teachers select literary and non-literary materials.

B. Taught Curriculum

At IMSE, we are committed to fostering a positive and inclusive learning environment that supports the diverse language needs of all students. Our classroom atmosphere emphasizes communication as a crucial tool for learning, promoting an environment that is both supportive and challenging. Our library and media resources are integrated into the learning experience to enhance student engagement and reflection, while displays throughout the school reflect and celebrate the current learning taking place. Our teachers cultivate classroom routines that are inclusive of the linguistic diversity of our students, and they continually strive to create learning experiences that meet the unique language needs of each student.

C. Assessed Curriculum

At IMSE, we align our assessment practices with the latest IBO language policy requirements to ensure that our evaluations accurately reflect student progress in all six language strands. Our assessment tools and strategies are designed to be reflective and informative, allowing us to continually improve our teaching methods and support student growth. For students who require additional language support, we provide modified assessments to accommodate their unique needs and ensure that they have equal access to our curriculum and programs.

MYP 5 (eAssesment) is offered to interested students in grade 10. This online assessment is conducted in English.

In DP

- English is the **language of instruction** for all DP subjects (unless we offer subjects in other languages).
- Teachers ensure that **subject-specific vocabulary** is explicitly taught.
- Language teaching and learning is embodied in the **unit plans** of specific subjects.

All DP assessments follow the published IB DP protocols and timetables and are conducted in the school's Language A (English). Subject teachers ensure that students' level of academic English and understanding of Key Terms is sufficient to facilitate student success.

Language and Literature in the DP requires students to study both Literary and non-Literary texts. At HL, 6 texts are studied; at SL, 4 texts are studied. One of the texts must have been originally written in a Language other than Language A. The Literature course is available in Turkish A. At HL, 13 texts are studied; at SL, 6 texts are studied.

All students are required to study a second language (Group 2 – Language Acquisition). Currently the languages on offer are Arabic B and Arabic ab initio. Students can also fulfill this requirement by taking one of the Language and Literature courses in a different language (Turkish A).

Government curriculum

Government regulations require the school to teach a government mandated curriculum in Grades 10 – 12 in Science, Math and English. Assessments are conducted in English each semester. Assessment for this curriculum is in the form of:

- 1) 2 x evaluations marked out of 10
- 2) 1 x monthly exam marked out of 20
- 3) 1 x Final exam marked out of 60

Total mark submitted to the government out of 100.

Going forward, students from Grade 10 up will be offered the choice of pursuing the IB Curriculum or the local Government curriculum. External exams are conducted in English.

Mother Tongue Support

- **Language Environment**

Our school is situated in a multilingual environment where multiple languages are widely spoken. In our region, Arabic is the dominant language in the Middle East and much of Iraq, while Kurdish is the primary language in Kurdistan. There are also language-minority communities such as the Turkmen, who primarily use the language orally, although it may be written in other countries. Our school is affiliated with a foundation in Turkey and serves a number of Turkish families living in Erbil, further adding to the linguistic diversity of our student body. We embrace and celebrate this diversity and strive to create an inclusive language-rich environment that supports the development and maintenance of students' multiple languages and cultures.

- **Importance of Mother Tongue Support**

At IMSE, we understand the importance of mother tongue in language learning. Our language policy is informed by the latest research, which highlights the strong correlation between mother tongue competence and proficiency in additional languages. Recognizing the complexity and fluidity of mother tongue, we acknowledge that students may have multiple languages they identify with and different strengths in each language.

We believe that all students should have the opportunity to develop proficiency in their mother tongue, including both oral and written expression and comprehension, as well as cognitive and conceptual learning. To support this, we encourage students to use their mother tongue when appropriate in the classroom. By valuing and promoting students' mother tongues, we aim to create a positive learning environment that recognizes the linguistic diversity of our students.

Student Body

At our school, we recognize that the concept of the mother tongue is complex and fluid. To better understand our student body, data was collected on the language backgrounds of our students during the 2018-2019 school year. This information was gathered through self-reported (G3-G9) or teacher-reported (KG1 – G 2) data, and was used to better understand the diverse language

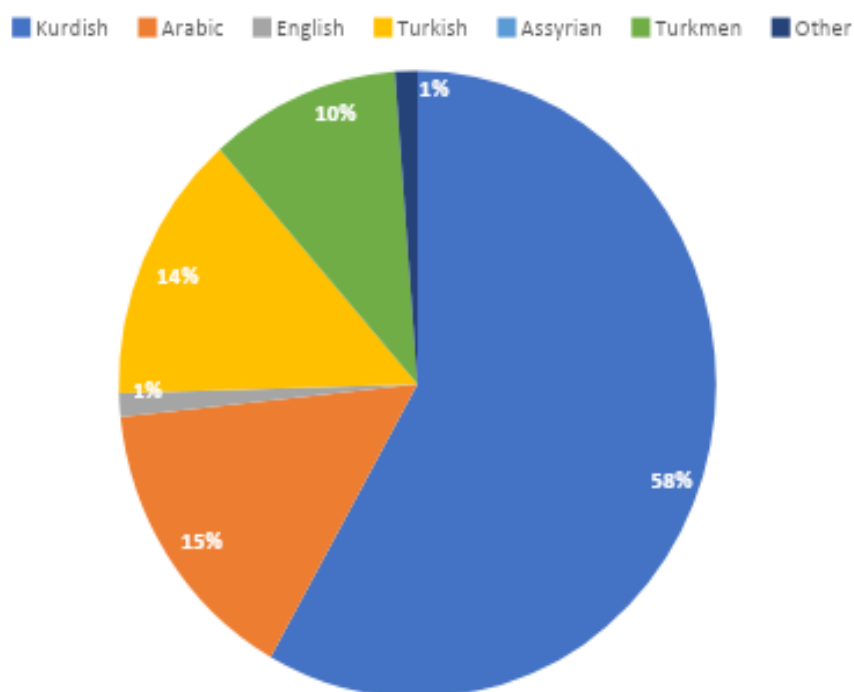
backgrounds present within our school community.

It should be noted that the International Baccalaureate (IB) recognizes that students may have multiple mother tongues, or may identify with a language even if they are not fluent in it. The IB also recognizes the importance of supporting students in becoming proficient in their mother tongue, as it has been shown to have a positive impact on students' language acquisition and cognitive development.

It is important to note that this data should be viewed as a snapshot in time and may not accurately reflect the current linguistic make-up of our student body.

Mother Tongue of students in IMSE							
All Students	Kurdi sh	Arabi c	Engli sh	Turki sh	Assyri an	Turkm en	Othe r
KG	96	25	2	23	0	17	2
PYP	301	81	0	40	1	49	7
MYP/DP	197	104	0	30	0	32	1
HS	58	19	0	0	0	17	0
Total	652	229	2	93	1	115	10

Mother Tongue of students in IMSE 2022-2023



Approximately 11% of students said they spoke more than one language as a mother tongue. The percentages total more than 100% because some students reported more than one mother tongue.

No student reported being monolingual English; all had another mother tongue as well.

Other languages included: Russian, Polish, German, and Hindi. The total number of students was 7.

All of the languages except for German were spoken by at least one teacher in the relevant division.

Mother Tongue Support

Our school is committed to providing language support that recognizes and values the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of our students. We acknowledge that the first language a child learns, also known as the mother tongue, plays a crucial role in their overall language development and academic success.

PYP: As per the latest IBO language policy requirements, we offer support for the mother tongues of our students, including Kurdish, Turkmen, Turkish, and Arabic, through both formal classes and the presence of adult speakers of these languages. Our language support efforts are centered around the belief that students should be provided with the opportunity to become proficient in their mother tongue, both in terms of comprehension and expression in oral and written forms, and for cognitive and conceptual learning.

In addition to formal classes, we also utilize resources such as teaching assistants who are proficient in multiple languages, including English, Turkmen, Kurdish, Arabic, and Turkish. This makes them a valuable resource for students who may face communication difficulties in the classroom. We also provide support through increased lessons for Kurdish and Turkish, as well as access to resources such as language books in our library.

While English language development remains a priority for our school, we understand the importance of supporting our students' mother tongues and ensuring they receive the necessary resources and support to thrive in their academic and personal lives.

MYP: In MYP, Turkish, Arabic, and Kurdish are all offered as additional language courses. Students are placed in courses based on their demonstrated language abilities and potential for language learning, regardless of their language background or mother tongue. This approach aims to create a fair and inclusive language learning environment that supports the development of students' linguistic skills and intercultural understanding.

DP: In support of fostering multilingualism and cultural awareness within the IB DP, our language policy emphasizes maintaining and developing students' mother tongues. We offer Turkish A and Arabic B to support our Turkish and Arabic-speaking students. Turkish A provides advanced language skills and a deeper understanding of Turkish literature and culture. Arabic B helps students with prior knowledge of Arabic to enhance their proficiency, while Arabic ab initio caters to beginners. These offerings ensure linguistic and cultural growth, preparing students for global citizenship in an inclusive environment.

English Language Support

As nearly all of our students are acquiring English as an additional language, we are committed to the principles and practices of effective language learning as outlined by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). To support our students with lower English fluency, we take the following approach:

- Training our teachers in language acquisition principles and evidence-based teaching methods for English language learners.
- Assessing and tracking student language progress at the beginning and end of each academic year.
- Providing differentiated instructional materials that are accessible to all learners, including those

with lower English proficiency.

- Employing one or more English language support teachers who work with individual students in the classroom and in pull-out classes.
- Having bilingual classroom assistants who speak one or more of the students' mother tongue languages in the Primary Years Programme (PYP).
- Organizing streamed English classes that are tailored to each student's language proficiency level in the Middle Years Programme (MYP).
- Providing additional English language support classes after school for MYP/DP students with lower proficiency.
- Creating a classroom environment that leverages the language skills of both teachers and students to enhance access to the curriculum for all learners.
- For students with lower language competencies, we offer targeted support through additional language development classes, personalized learning plans, boot camps and access to language learning resources. These measures are designed to enhance their proficiency and confidence, ensuring they can fully participate in the academic program. Our approach ensures all students achieve the necessary language skills for success in their studies and future endeavors, fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment (DP).

Professional Development

The school recognizes the importance of providing ongoing professional development opportunities for all school staff, including administrators, teachers, librarians, assistants, and others, in the field of language learning and teaching. These opportunities should align with the latest IBO language policy requirements and may take place both within and outside of the school.

In order to support this goal, the school may offer the following professional development opportunities:

- Online or in-person professional development for language teachers to stay current with the latest best practices and developments in language teaching.
- Professional development courses for all teachers on teaching English as an additional language to non-native speakers. These courses should be based on the latest research-based best practices in language teaching and aligned with the IBO's language policy requirements.
- English language development opportunities for local teachers to improve their fluency and teaching skills in the language.
- Courses in local languages (such as Turkish, Kurdish, Arabic) for foreign teachers to support their understanding of the cultural context and local language needs of the students.
- It is important for the school to regularly review and update its professional development offerings to ensure that they meet the changing needs of its staff and are in line with the latest IBO language policy requirements.

Resources & Practices for Involving Parents

Recognizing the critical role that parents and families play in a child's language development, the IMSE engages in close collaboration with them to understand their aspirations for their children's

language learning and to provide guidance on ways to foster a supportive home environment that promotes language acquisition. As a school, we acknowledge the ongoing impact of parents and families on a child's language growth throughout their education, and strive to work together to create optimal conditions for language development.

A. Communicating with Parents

In accordance with the latest IBO language policy for IB schools, we are committed to involving parents in their students' language learning in a respectful and accessible manner. To support this, we have established the following language policy:

- **Clear language policies for parents:** We provide clear guidelines and expectations for parent involvement in their child's language learning. These policies are communicated in a way that is easily understood by parents and are accessible at all times.
- **Guidance for parents:** We provide guidance on how parents can support their child's language learning, including ideas for assisting with language homework and assignments in a language other than the student's mother tongue. Our recommendations are adjusted on a case-by-case basis to best support each student's language learning progress.
- **Home language enrichment activities:** We encourage and support parents in engaging in language enrichment activities with their child at home. These activities can help build constructive relationships around language learning and give students the opportunity to share their language learning with a parent.
- **Reading at home:** We encourage reading at home by providing access to library books in multiple languages, including English, Turkish, Arabic, and Kurdish.
- **Formal communications:** We send formal communications home in four languages (English, Turkish, Arabic, and Kurdish) and include announcements, unit newsletters, and updates on student progress.
- **Regular communication with parents:** We use communication books, Class Dojo (PYP), ManageBac (MYP/DP), and WhatsApp groups to regularly send updates and messages to parents.
- **Photos and videos:** We share photos and videos with parents to provide a visual representation of student progress and involvement in language learning activities.
- **Parent-teacher and student-led conferences:** We hold parent-teacher or student-led conferences at least once per semester to provide updates on student progress and answer any questions or concerns parents may have. In DP parents can be contacted on a regular basis to track student's progress and solve the concerns.
- **Multilingual displays:** We maintain displays in common areas in multiple languages to support language learning and promote cultural awareness.
- **PYP G5 Exhibition:** The PYP G5 Exhibition demonstrates students' language proficiency for parents and the community and provides a showcase of their language learning achievements.
- **MYP 5 Personal Project:** The MYP Year 5 Personal Project is a key communication tool with parents, showcasing the culmination of students' skills, interests, and learning throughout the Middle Years Programme (MYP). Through this project, students independently explore a topic of personal interest, demonstrating their ability to set goals, manage time, and apply various skills such as research, critical thinking, and creativity.

Presenting their projects to parents allows students to articulate their learning journey, challenges, and achievements, providing parents with a clear view of their child's growth and development. This interaction helps parents understand the depth and breadth of the MYP curriculum, the student's strengths and areas of interest, and the significance of the skills their children are acquiring.

- **DP TOK Exhibition:** is a valuable tool for communicating with parents by showcasing the critical thinking and analytical skills students develop in the Theory of Knowledge (TOK) course. Through the exhibition, students present real-world objects and explain their significance in relation to TOK concepts and questions. This process helps parents understand how their children are learning to question knowledge, evaluate sources, and reflect on their own thinking processes. The exhibition also provides a tangible demonstration of students' ability to connect abstract ideas to practical, everyday contexts, thereby giving parents insight into the unique and rigorous nature of the IB DP curriculum and the development of their children's intellectual and personal growth.
- **DP Extended Essay Conference:** The DP Extended Essay conference serves as an effective platform for communicating with parents about their child's progress and the skills they are developing through the Extended Essay (EE) process. During the conference, students present their research topics, methodologies, and initial findings, allowing parents to gain insight into the depth and rigor of the IB DP program. This interaction helps parents understand the critical thinking, research, and writing skills their children are cultivating. Additionally, the conference provides an opportunity for parents to ask questions and engage with teachers, fostering a collaborative environment that supports students' academic journeys and highlights the importance of parental involvement in their success.

B. School Activities

We provide language assessments and regular progress reports to families to inform them of their child's language development in line with the latest IBO language policy and best practices in language education.

- We organize language workshops and information sessions for parents to provide them with the knowledge and skills needed to support their child's language learning at home, and we encourage active participation in these sessions.
- We encourage students to read widely in English and provide them with access to a diverse range of reading materials, including books, magazines, and online resources that are culturally and linguistically appropriate.
- We create opportunities for students to practice their language skills through class discussions, presentations, debates, and other communicative activities that are meaningful and relevant to the students' lives and interests.
- We offer extra-curricular language clubs and programs, such as English language camps, to provide students with additional opportunities to improve their language skills in a fun and engaging environment.
- We create a welcoming and supportive environment for language learning that fosters a sense of belonging and a positive attitude towards the English language by recognizing and valuing the students' diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.
- We ensure that language policies and practices are reviewed regularly to ensure that they

align with the latest IBO language policy and best practices in language education, and that the school's language assessment and progress reports accurately reflect the students' language proficiency and growth.

- We invite parents to talk in English about their careers and skills to provide students with authentic language exposure and to encourage cross-cultural understanding and appreciation.
- We communicate regularly with our parent committee about feedback on our language programs to ensure that they meet the needs and expectations of the school community.
- At the end of each term, the school demonstrates an assembly in which the students represent different kinds of performances related to our unit of inquiry, such as singing, dancing, acting, presented in different languages to showcase their multilingual and multicultural competences.
- Our school offers Action Service weekly by joining different clubs according to their interests, providing students with opportunities to use their language skills in real-life situations and to make a positive impact in their local and global communities.

IB Language Policy Committee & Policy History

The IB's language policy committee (LPC) is responsible for maintaining the language policy, monitoring its implementation, and considering recommendations on proposals related to language at IMSE, in line with the latest IBO language policy and best practices in language education.

The language policy outlines our school's vision for language learning and the ongoing efforts required to realize this vision. The school recognizes that ongoing reflection and improvement are essential for effective language education, and the language policy serves as a guiding document for our language curriculum planning and decision-making.

To ensure that our language policy remains up-to-date and relevant, it will undergo regular review every three years, or more frequently if necessary. This review process will involve input from all stakeholders, including teachers, students, parents, and members of the LPC, and will take into account the latest research and best practices in language education.

The language policy will be integrated into the language scope and sequence, which outlines the goals and expectations for language learning at IMSE, and will be used to guide language instruction and assessment. The school is committed to providing a rich and supportive language learning environment that prepares students to be successful, multilingual, and culturally competent global citizens.