

Wenzhou Union International School

Language Policy

Updated on May 9, 2026 | To be reviewed annually in August



1. Philosophy

At WUIS, we believe that language is central to learning, identity, and the development of international-mindedness in our students. It is the primary vehicle through which we inquire, think, and communicate our understanding of the world. We view our students' linguistic diversity as a great strength and are committed to nurturing a multilingual environment where all cultural perspectives and languages are valued. Our approach to language development reflects the IB philosophy by promoting open communication, understanding, and respect among all members of the school community. We aim to build a positive culture of language learning in which students are proud of their identities and develop as caring, open-minded communicators.

2. School Linguistic Profile

Our school has a unique linguistic and cultural profile that forms the foundation of this policy. Our community consists of international students from various linguistic backgrounds and foreign Chinese learners.

- 2.1 Language of Instruction (LoI): English
- 2.2 Host Country Language: Chinese (Mandarin)
- 2.3 Additional Languages Offered: Currently offering Spanish and other language options offered based on staff availability and specialty
- 2.4 Mother Tongues: Our students and families represent a wide range of home languages, which we see as a valuable resource for learning.

3. Aims of the Language Policy

This policy aims at:

- 3.1 Developing students' proficiency in our language of instruction, English.
- 3.2 Encouraging mother tongue and home language development.
- 3.3 Supporting students learning Mandarin Chinese, the host country's language, as a native language, a second language, or an additional language at school.
- 3.4 Ensuring all teachers understand their role as language teachers, responsible for the overall language development of all students.
- 3.5 Promoting the development of all attributes of the IB learner profile through language learning.

4. Language Provision

4.1 Language of Instruction (LoI) - English

English is the primary language of instruction and the common language of communication across the school. All curriculum areas are taught in English. We

recognize that for many of our students, English is an additional language. Therefore, all teaching and learning will:

- 4.1.1 Build on what students already know and can do in their own languages.
- 4.1.2 Address the different needs of language learning, including those of students learning in languages other than their mother tongue.
- 4.1.3 Use a wide range of inquiry-based strategies to make learning accessible and engaging.

4.2 Host Country Language - Chinese (Mandarin)

In recognition of our location in China, we place great importance on learning Chinese (Mandarin) starting in Grade 1 (at age 6). We offer differentiated pathways for:

- 4.2.1 Native/Near-Native Speakers: To further develop literacy skills and cultural awareness.
- 4.2.2 Non-Native Speakers: To develop communicative competence and an appreciation for Chinese culture.

4.3 Additional Language

The school offers additional languages beyond English and Chinese as a co-curricular class starting in Grade 3 (age 8). Depending on staff availability and their specialty, the school offers different language options. This program focuses on communication and cross-cultural understanding, further developing students' international-mindedness.

4.4 Mother Tongue / Home Language Support

We believe that the continued development of a student's mother tongue is essential for growth and personal identity. While we may not offer formal instruction in all home languages, we actively support them by:

- 4.4.1 Motivating students to use their home languages as a tool for thinking and to access prior knowledge in the classroom.
- 4.4.2 Encouraging students to continue language and literacy development at home.
- 4.4.3 Utilizing our library to acquire books and digital resources in the main languages represented in our school community.
- 4.4.4 Creating an environment where students can see their home language and culture valued.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.1 School Leadership: Will ensure the allocation of resources for the implementation and continuous refinement of this policy and our language programs.
- 5.2 All Teachers: Are considered language teachers. They are responsible for modeling language, explicitly teaching language skills within their units of inquiry, and differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all language learners.
- 5.3 School Librarian: The school librarian plays an essential role in implementing this policy by curating a dynamic, multilingual collection of books and nurturing a culture of reading literacy and inquiry. The librarian will acquire

and promote resources in English, Chinese, Spanish, Arabic, and other languages to support the curriculum and students' identities. By collaborating with teachers, designing inclusive library spaces, and facilitating reading initiatives, the librarian helps develop information literacy, a love of reading, and international-mindedness, ensuring all students see their language and culture reflected.

5.4 Students: Are encouraged to be language risk-takers, to fully use their linguistic abilities to make language meaningful, and to respect the language diversity within our community.

5.5 Families: Are essential partners. We encourage families to support mother tongue development and to engage in open communication with the school about their child's language journey.

6. Assessment

Language learning will be assessed as part of the school's overall assessment policy, which is consistent with IB expectations. This will involve monitoring, documenting, and measuring student progress in the language of instruction, host country language, and additional languages, using a variety of tools and strategies.

7. Policy Review

This language policy is a living document. It will be reviewed annually with input from teachers, students, and parents. Adjustments are made based on feedback and evolving best practices to meet the needs of our community and align with IB standards and practices.

Reference

International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). (2014). *Programme standards and practices*. Retrieved from [<https://www.ibo.org/globalassets/new-structure/become-an-ib-school/pdfs/program-standards-and-practices-en.pdf>]

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