



II. GIMNAZIJA MARIBOR



INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE

Language Policy

A policy for the teaching, use and support of languages in the IBO Diploma Programme

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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.



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1. Mission Statement

II. gimnazija Maribor's language policy outlines the process of language learning throughout the Diploma Programme. It informs teachers of the best teaching and learning practices throughout the curriculum, communicates our intentions and methods to members of the school community, and reinforces international-mindedness within our local community and further afield.

2. Language Philosophy

In an increasingly globalised world where linguistic proficiency in more than just one language is a necessity, II. gimnazija Maribor, as an IB school, strives to create and foster a safe environment where students are encouraged to use more than just their mother tongue. For this purpose, the school:

- implements, communicates and regularly reviews the language policy, which helps to foster intercultural understanding through communicating in a variety of ways in more than one language,
- has and reviews the language policy so that it is aligned with IB language policy guidelines,
- recognises multilingualism as a fact, a right and a resource for learning,
- identifies, in its language policy, a variety of physical and virtual resources used to facilitate language development.

In the IB DP at II. gimnazija Maribor, English is used as a medium for learning across the DP curriculum. In this view, we see language learning not as the sole responsibility of the language teachers, but integrated into all learning—every teacher is a language teacher. Further, we realise that the deep relationships between language, identity, culture and power have an impact on teachers' pedagogical views. Consequently, at II. gimnazija Maribor all IB students experience a rich language programme in which English is the primary language of instruction, while German, French, and Spanish are taught as additional optional languages (Language B). Slovene (Language A: Literature) is obligatory at higher level for all Slovene students, while Serbian (Croatian, Bosnian) is obligatory for all Serbian (Croatian, Bosnian) students, and Macedonian is offered to all Macedonian students. The school also offers instruction in additional mother tongues to students coming from other countries, such as Italy, Uzbekistan, Albania, Ukraine or Russia. The lessons are carried out by individual teachers once per week for two school lessons (in some cases, lessons are carried out using Skype). We understand that the most conducive environment to language learning is a positive and encouraging one, where all students feel culturally and linguistically valued.

Language is the key learning vessel and medium of inquiry in all aspects of intellectual, social and emotional development. It plays an essential role in all learning areas and is strongly linked with self-esteem and cultural identity. Language is the means of expressing and exploring, and enables

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self-discovery, the formation of ideas, building perspectives, cultural awareness and an understanding of the cultures of others.

At II. gimnazija Maribor, we recognise that all IB teachers are language teachers, regardless of the subject they teach, and all parents are essential contributors to the language learning process. Thus, the students' cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) is fostered and nurtured. Through language use and language instruction in different subjects, we encourage students to develop as deeper, more perceptive thinkers; as responsible, empathetic citizens of the world; and as more effective communicators in multilingual society.

Our language programme considers students' different learning styles and individual development. Thus, we plan differentiated and varied instruction that integrates skills such as listening, speaking, viewing, reading and writing. Students learn language, through language, and about language.

For the purpose of this document, we use "mother tongue" to describe a student's dominant language. A student whose mother tongue is not English (the language of instruction in the IB DP at II. gimnazija Maribor) is described as a "student who learns in a different language other than their mother tongue". In the IB DP at II. gimnazija Maribor, English is the language of instruction for all IB students.

3. School Language Profile

II. gimnazija Maribor acknowledges that the development of language is fundamental to the instinctive need to communicate. It is integral to exploring and sustaining personal development and identity. It is socially constructed and dependent on the number and nature of our social interactions and relationships. By communicating society's expectations, language is a strong enculturating force shaping daily interactions. Thus, we develop a cultural identity. Language shapes our thinking; specific patterns of dialogue and discourse help develop particular kinds of learning and cognitive processes. Thus, II. gimnazija Maribor strives to foster a linguistic environment that:

- is open and inclusive,
- affirms the students' and the teachers' identity and autonomy,
- promotes critical thinking.

Slovenian, Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian and Macedonian (A literature – HL and SL) are offered in the DP (years 11 and 12). English A: Language and Literature and/or English B are obligatory for all students, and are offered at two levels (SL, HL). German, Spanish and French are offered as additional languages at SL and HL. Students who are not native speakers of Slovene are offered Slovene as part of their curriculum, in years 11 and 12, for two hours per week (Ab initio, which is not considered a part of the students' IB DP workload). Students are encouraged to take the national exam at the end of the two-year course, which they need in order to enrol in Slovene universities. All students who are native speakers of Slovene need to take Slovene HL in order to preserve and strengthen their mother tongue and national identity.

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The head of school is responsible for finding a mother-tongue teacher for any student who is accepted at II. gimnazija Maribor in the IB DP, and whose mother tongue is other than Slovene, Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian or Macedonian.

The school was founded in 1950 and has been offering the DP since 1990. Since its beginnings, the school has maintained a diverse and multicultural community. Since 2000, we have been enrolling students from former Yugoslav countries, i.e. Croatia, Serbia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro in the IB DP. Currently, we have a small proportion (approximately 9 each year) of these students.

As part of the admission process, family background and the candidate's hitherto exposure to the language of instruction are taken into account. Students are informally assessed on their level and ability to use the language of instruction, English. We advise families on the procedures on how to best support their children linguistically; we encourage them to maintain mother tongue usage, we support them in learning another language (German, Spanish or French) through another language (English), and when needed, we help them connect with a private English teacher for additional language support outside the classroom.

4. Intercultural Awareness and Cultural Identity

The school uses language to promote the fundamental concepts of the IB DP: holistic learning, intercultural awareness and communication, all of which go beyond the individual and their immediate community.

The school recognises that language is key to exploring and sustaining cultural identity, and that the mother tongue and any other language used in constructing meaning are intimately connected to a person's relationship with the world, and how they come to feel about that world. We, at II. gimnazija Maribor, firmly believe that one's mother tongue is part of one's identity, and thus encourage students to speak and express themselves in their own language whenever possible.

The school aims to promote self-esteem through additive bilingualism (where another language and culture does not replace that of the mother tongue) and will do this by incorporating and celebrating cultural diversity within the school. In fact, language is seen as a key element in the development of international mindedness, which is at the core of IBO educational philosophy.

The school uses its language programmes to encourage the qualities, attitudes and characteristics identified in the IB learner profile, which promotes responsible citizenship.

The school aims to enable students to understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication.

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5. Mother Tongue Support, Maintenance and Development

The school promotes mother-tongue development as part of the students' cognitive development and academic performance. Further, we believe that the students' social and emotional well-being is of the utmost importance and strive to foster a conducive environment in which students can express themselves freely. Thus, the school aims to enable students to retain a positive attitude towards their mother tongue by showing acceptance of their cultural identity, and encourages them to continue developing knowledge and fluency in their mother tongue. Consequently, for example, every year the students whose mother tongue is not Slovene or English present their countries and languages they speak in class, during their class lesson, or at an annual event at a PTA meeting in November. A short performance follows where, for example, Shakespeare's Sonnet 18 is recited in 10 different languages. Furthermore, in previous years the students performed Branislav Nušič's *Gospođa ministarka* in four languages (Macedonian, Serbian (Croatian, Bosnian), Slovene and English) as part of their CAS project. In 2019, students performed Branislav Nušič's *Pokojnik* in Serbian, Macedonian, Montenegrin and Italian. Further, the school recognises the need to offer school meetings and important documentation in Slovene and in English (such as policies, notices to candidates, and student progress reports).

Students are encouraged to use their mother tongue at school events, such as concerts and/or assemblies, and to establish enrichment groups where they can teach their peers their mother-tongue.

6. Students Learning in a Second Language

The school recognises that all students in the IB DP learn in a second language, and will be understanding of the difficulties this can occasionally cause in expressing and/or accessing information.

Teachers will appreciate that learners, who learn in a language other than their mother tongue, need to develop an awareness of language choices, appropriate use of language and of linguistic devices. Further, teachers continue to liaise with parents to understand a student's specific language needs.

7. IB Language Learning Requirements

Diploma Requirements at II. gimnazija Maribor

Students study at least two languages.

LANGUAGE A

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Language A: Literature (Group 1) is the study of literature in the student's first language, including the study of selections of world literature and allows the close study of literary texts and their varying contexts.

Language A: Language and Literature (Group 1) is offered to students who have a high level of competency in the language. This language and literature course focuses on critical literacy and the way meaning in texts is constructed by, among other things, the contexts of production and reception. They include the study of both language and literature, and are available at higher and standard level.

LANGUAGE B

The second language course Language B (Group 2), can be studied to various depths:

Language B is offered to students who have had some previous experience in learning the language, and is available at either higher or standard level (HL or SL).

Language B courses share an emphasis on the importance of understanding language acquisition as a process that also involves the recognition and understanding of another culture.

Slovene Ab Initio is offered at II. gimnazija Maribor to students whose mother tongue is not Slovene. This course is not part of the students' IB DP curriculum, and is designed to facilitate students' acquisition of Slovene (as the language of the environment).

There are several activities that take place at II. gimnazija Maribor which encourage students to keep a positive attitude towards their mother tongue and to express their cultural identity. We encourage students to continue developing knowledge and fluency in their mother tongue by organising a number of events: multilingual plays/performances, IB Day, in-class presentations, travel lectures, etc.

8. The Teachers' Role in Language Learning in the Classroom

The head of school will update and maintain the language profiles of second-language students.

At II. gimnazija Maribor, IB DP classroom population is somewhat multicultural; therefore, teachers need to find creative ways for creating equality for learners who are learning in a language other than their mother tongue.

At the school, we acknowledge that language learning takes place in non-language subjects, as well, which is why:

- the school has established a policy steering committee that articulates a shared IB mission and philosophy regarding language policy;
- teachers recognise that students may not necessarily all share the same previous learning and background knowledge;
- teachers recognise that some students may bring previous knowledge in their mother-tongue to the curriculum, and will endeavour to support this knowledge appropriately;

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- teachers will demonstrate scaffolding (such as using the mother tongue to carry out research, visual aids, graphic organisers, demonstrations, dramatization, small, structured collaborative groups and teacher language) in order to develop the learners' increasing independence in taking responsibility for developing strategies for their own learning;
- teachers uphold high expectations, and offer numerous opportunities for learner-centred practice and interaction with cognitively rich materials and experiences;
- teachers will provide linguistic genre support for specific communicative situations within the curriculum and in assessment to assist in reading, writing, speaking and listening;
- teachers will offer meaningful tasks in an authentic context;
- teachers will offer mother-tongue students the option to work with their same mother tongue student peers, and also encourage multilingual groupings to encourage student translations.

Further, II. gimnazija Maribor

- ensures effective communication between DP teachers and mother tongue teachers (Macedonian, Serbian) in regards to fundamental concepts, curriculum content and school events;
- recognises the need for all teachers to have a conceptual understanding of how language and learning are connected across the IB DP curriculum;
- aims to enable students to access, take part, and achieve success in the academic, social, and cultural life of the school;
- recognises that language is the main tool in building our knowledge of the universe and our place in it, and the need for a well-planned and well-delivered curriculum that takes into account the needs of second-language learners;
- recognises the need for unit planning in order to consider the time and strategies needed to support second-language learners, and the need to activate learners' prior understanding regarding the usages of their mother tongues;
- recognises the need for creating a safe environment where students feel able to take risks during language learning, and use their knowledge in real-life situations,
- develops and maintains language profiles on all second-language learners;
- recognises that it takes time and experience for second-language students to perform at the same academic level as native speakers;
- enables continuing professional development (CPD) for all the staff on effective language practices regarding language teaching and learning (e.g. teachers regularly participate in IB DP development courses or EU-funded linguistic and pedagogy courses abroad).

9. The School's Role in Language Learning

In order to accommodate and nurture the diversity of additive bilingualism in the IB DP at II. gimnazija Maribor, the school offers a range of resources and learning options across the DP curriculum. Such provisions, we believe, mean that our IB students become highly proficient, literate and knowledgeable in more than just language. Further, the school places great

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importance on language learning, including the mother tongue, the second language (the language of the environment) and other languages if/when applicable.

Further, in order to foster a thriving multilingual environment, the school:

- enables collaborative planning, recognising that all teachers are responsible for the language development of the students and teachers,
- addresses the diversity of the students' language needs,
- through teaching, demonstrates that all teachers are responsible for the language development of students,
- has a language policy steering committee that reviews language policy issues, introduces new language if/when necessary;
- changes/adapts the range of linguistic services supported;
- provides safe and effective learning environments;
- provides technologies that facilitate effective communication with individuals and communities at the local, national, and international levels, enabling IB students to develop into effective, knowledgeable communicators who are attuned to cultural nuances (e.g. Skype lessons, Eduroam, internet access points, etc.);
- promotes and encourages lifelong learning both with teachers and students - students and teachers actively develop thinking, research, communication and self-management skills.

The school has an admissions process that includes an interview and language screening. In addition, there are several language teachers on staff, which enables the school to evaluate the students' language needs and establish whether the school can cater for them.

If needed, the school endeavours to provide experts qualified in the field of linguistics to work not only with learners, but also with teachers, librarians, coordinators and administrators to ensure all are appropriately trained in the best practices for teaching those learning in a language other than their mother tongue.

The school will, on admission, draw up a language background profile for individual students to determine where the student can be placed in the continuum of language learning, and to ensure students are placed in the appropriate support programme where their language needs are catered for effectively. This profile is reviewed every 5 years depending on the recommendation of the admissions team involved.

The school will work with the parents of the students who are studying in a language other than their mother tongue to ensure additional support from his or her teacher or other support if necessary. In general, our small classes enable extensive supervision and support, facilitating linguistic progress.

Student profiles are reassessed at the beginning of the IB DP to ensure they are placed correctly. Students need to sit a placement test, whereupon they are placed into two groups - English A: Language and Literature, English B HL / English B SL. The development of a student's repertoire

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of languages is recorded. This could include indications of progress in both mother tongue(s) and second language(s), languages students have been exposed to, and how they continue to use and develop them.

The school will, wherever possible, ensure a team of mother-tongue speakers (of German, English, French and Spanish) to maintain cultural diversity within the community.

10. Language Teaching Resources

The school library/media centre will continue to build up resources of texts and other media in all the mother tongues of the student population.

Where possible, the school tries to provide mainstream subject-specific materials, including grammar course books, literary texts, reference books, supplementary publishers' materials, and resources related to the areas of interaction, with parallel mother-tongue texts. Also, additional up-to-date literary works in other languages are available.

The school makes every effort to provide information technology resources that enable all students and teachers to access material in their own languages. These resources include the Internet, DVDs, and videos.

The role of the librarian is also to offer students help and support in finding appropriate sources, citing in line with recognised citing conventions and in observing academic honesty, especially while writing the extended essay.

The school recognises that administrators, teachers, librarians and other school staff have to acquire professional development in the fields of language learning and teaching, and on how to ensure the language policy becomes a working document.

11. Review Process and the Areas of Development

The IB DP coordinator will take responsibility for reflecting on and observing academic processes (differentiation, assessment and mother-tongue research) in the school throughout the academic year, and provide feedback to the head of school.

The IB DP coordinator will take responsibility for reflecting on and observing pastoral issues within the school (communication, socialisation, homework, academic issues, support) throughout the academic year, and provide feedback to the head of school and parents with suggested support procedures.

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The language policy will be regularly reviewed and/or revised by the language policy steering committee as new programmes are added, thereafter every five years, in order to ascertain the effectiveness of the programme.

As new ideas are developed, the results of research will impact the school's language policy. Suggested ideas and procedures will be reviewed collaboratively by the coordinator, teachers, the head of school and parents.

In order to keep the whole school community informed of policy developments, the policy will be available on the school's website.

12. Resources

IBO. 2008. Guidelines for developing a school language policy. Geneva. IBO.

IBO. 2011. Language and learning in IB programmes. Geneva. IBO.

IBO. 2012. Guidelines for school self-reflection on its language policy. Geneva. IBO.

IBO. 2014. Developing academic literacy in IB programmes. Geneva. IBO.

IBO. 2016. Social and emotional well-being in International Baccalaureate World Schools. Geneva. IBO.

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