

Name of Policy:	Languages Policy
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Applicable to:	Whole school
Effective date:	December 2018
Approved on behalf of the ELT:	December 2018
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Introduction/abstract:

(Reference to mission statement, NCBIS values, IB Learner Profile, NCBIS Definition of Global Mindedness, CIS, COBIS, ISI)

New Cairo British International School aims to bring **out the best in everyone**. In a truly international context, with students and teachers from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, this also means drawing on their current and prior experiences so that they can develop into well rounded global citizens. Students and parents in 2017-18 reported a total of 52 different home languages, although there may be many more. All students should have the opportunity to develop skills in more than one language, while also learning to understand and respect the similarities and differences of people from different cultures and backgrounds through effective and meaningful communication. This involves students maintaining and developing their home languages, as well as the languages of instruction of the school. This policy aims to provide a framework within which students can thrive in our caring international community and beyond into a rapidly changing world.

NCBIS Language Context

- English is the primary language of instruction in the British Primary and Secondary streams.
- Dutch is the language of instruction in the Dutch stream.

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- Arabic is the language of our host country.
- Languages other than English and Dutch are spoken at home by the majority of NCBIS students.

NCBIS Language Philosophy

- Language is central to learning and is critical to communication.
- Language constructs meaning and deepens understanding.
- Language is important to create and demonstrate cultural identity and intercultural understanding, promoting peace and open-mindedness.
- Authentic language learning is critical to developing lifelong learners.
- All teachers, support staff and members of the community are teachers of language.
- Students with a strong foundation in one language will be able to access other languages more successfully.
- We encourage our community to maintain their home language(s) whilst engaging with the language(s) of instruction (English, Dutch, MFL) and that of our host country (Arabic).
- We encourage our community to feel a sense of pride in their language skills and home culture.
- Learning additional languages is seen as highly beneficial for cognitive development and will develop globally-minded individuals who have an experience of different cultures and can communicate in an appropriate manner.
- Learning Arabic is strongly encouraged. Learners of English as an additional language are provided support at each level of education, including for members of staff.
- We encourage additive bilingualism and discourage subtractive bilingualism².
- Parents are involved in workshops aimed at supporting their involvement with their children's development of CALP³ in their home language(s).

² Whereas subtractive bilingualism usually results in the replacement of students' home languages with the language of the most powerful group, additive bilingualism (Cummins 1994) aims to extend students' linguistic repertoires (Cummins, 1994, in *Language and Learning in IB programmes*, IBO, 2014)

³ Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (the language necessary to understand and discuss content in the classroom)

- The common language of communication in NCBIS is English, but students are encouraged to use their home language(s) where appropriate, inclusive and academically/socially beneficial.

Principles of Language Learning [From Principles to Practice]

- Successful language acquisition is based on a student's deep understanding of their home language(s).
- Language instruction is to be included in all aspects of the curriculum.
- Learning is best achieved when students are actively involved in speaking and listening, viewing and presenting, reading and writing.
- Language learning is most successful in an authentic context using meaningful and engaging language tasks.
- Teachers should be encouraged to model multilingual communication skills where possible.
- Teachers should encourage students to access their home languages, particularly when conceptual understanding is needed.
- Where practical, teachers will differentiate tasks and expectations to suit students' language levels and experience - an understanding of students' home languages will enable feedback on language to be more targeted and successful.
- Where the conventions of communication are unique in a given subject, the appropriate scaffolding must be in place to encourage students to succeed.
- Some students will need to be supported in their language learning, including in their home language(s). Appropriate support will be provided where possible. Additional costs may be incurred.
- Teachers will explicitly teach their subject's vocabulary and provide a variety of learning opportunities for subject-specific vocabulary.
- Students will be encouraged to discuss their school experiences with their family members in their home language(s).
- It may be necessary to provide some EAL students with specialist assistance to support English language learning, instead of other subjects.

- Students participate in the Young Interpreter Scheme, taking a leadership role in supporting new students and parents who arrive at NCBIS speaking languages other than English.⁴
- Members of staff display the languages they speak on their staff badges in order to facilitate effective multilingual communication between staff, students and parents.

Language Provision

Primary

NCBIS offers a range of language opportunities that are linked to their programme of inquiry. Students are able to progress in their language learning year on year, with more opportunities to expand offered in later primary years. Based on the needs of the child, students may be withdrawn from certain subjects to focus on English language learning.

For full details, please see Appendix 1, or the MFL department handbook.

Secondary

In secondary, students are able to continue with their languages from primary school and are also able to change which language they wish to study. The choice also increases, as more languages are offered as students approach exam level at IGCSE and IB Diploma.

Based on the needs of the child, students may be withdrawn from certain subjects to focus on English language learning.

For full details, please see Appendix 1, or the MFL department handbook.

Home Language(s)

The school follows overwhelming research⁵ that the maintenance and development of a student's home language is essential for their subsequent linguistic and academic development; the school will endeavour to support home language provision where feasible. In Primary school, we offer students opportunities to use

⁴ Information on the [Young Interpreter Scheme](#)

⁵ See [Language and Learning in IB programmes, IBO, 2014](#)

White *et al.* (2013) [Towards the Development of a Plurilingual Pedagogy: Making Use of Children's Informal Learning Practices](#)

See also research projects such as:

[Healthy Linguistic Diet](#), [Multilingualism: Empowering Individuals, Transforming Societies](#)

their home languages with other students in and outside their year group. NCBIS will encourage students to continue with outside tuition for their home language learning (should opportunities within school not exist). Parents will be invited to help with home language groups as part of our ECA programme.

The aim is for students to develop Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency in their home language(s), to allow students who return to their home country to be able to communicate and learn on a par with their peers.

Edexcel or Cambridge IGCSE (or GCSE where IGCSE is not available) will be offered to KS3 and KS4 students in their home language, either as a first or second language.

Within the IB Diploma Programme students whose home language is not offered within the subject offerings will be informed and encouraged to consider taking their home language as a school-supported self-taught subject in Group 1. For self-taught options, the school will offer support, however, parents are usually encouraged to provide an external tutor in the home language at an additional cost to the parent.

Appendix 1

Language Provision

Primary

Dutch Stream (Dutch is the language of instruction)

Group	Student group	Language Provision
1		Students study Phonics as a discrete lesson
1-7		English is taught as a second language
8		English with peers in Year 7
5-8	Home language Arabic speakers	Arabic first language offered but not compulsory (joining British stream Arabic class)
	Non-home language Arabic speakers	English and Arabic are taught as second languages

British Stream (English is the language of instruction)

Year	Student Group	Language Provision
1-3	Home language Arabic speakers	Arabic first language is offered but not compulsory - can choose French (or Spanish Y2-3)
	Non-home language Arabic speakers	Arabic second language or French (or Spanish Y2-3)
4-6	Home language Arabic speakers	Arabic first language strongly advised to parents

		May choose French or Spanish as a second language instead
	Non-home language Arabic speakers	Arabic, French or Spanish as a second language

Secondary

Key Stage 3 Languages

Students choose two foreign languages from Arabic as a First Language, and Arabic, French, Spanish or German as foreign languages up to the end of Year 9.

Key Stage 4 GCSE Languages

All students study at least one additional language in their GCSE/IGCSE. Languages on offer are: Edexcel IGCSE Arabic as a First Language, and French, German and Spanish as foreign languages. Edexcel GCSE Arabic as a foreign language.

Key Stage 3 and 4 Dutch for native or near-native speakers

Dutch can be studied as an extra subject after school in the Dutch Stream, up to IGCSE level.

IB Diploma Languages

Group 1 (Studies in Language and Literature) is for a fluent language user who may intend to study in the language at university and/or beyond, and who:

- is a native or near-native speaker;
- is a bilingual student (in reading or writing, or both);
- lives, or has lived and studied for a significant period, in a country where the target language is spoken.

Courses that will be offered at higher and standard level are:

English Language A: Language & Literature (HL/SL);

English A: Literature (HL/SL);

School supported self-taught Language A: Literature (SSST).

An alternative to English in Language A is SSST (School supported self-taught) at SL level (literature course aimed at students whose home language is not English, supported through taught lessons and guided self-study).

Students must study a language from **Group 2** (Language Acquisition)

Languages offered in Group 2 are:

Arabic B; French B; German B; Spanish B, French ab initio Spanish ab initio.

Language B is specifically for those who are learning the language as a modern foreign language and **is not for native or near-native speakers of the language**

An ideal student for Language B:

- has two to five years' (or more) experience of the target language;
- studied the language for GCSE/IGCSE or equivalent.

Ab initio SL is for a beginner who

- has little or no previous experience of the language;
- has less than one year's experience in the language in the last 5 years;
- may, in the case of a language with a written script different from the English one, have had formal lessons for up to one year in the target language.

Students will be encouraged where possible to achieve the bilingual diploma by studying a Group 1 subject in a language other than English