



INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF  
HERZEN UNIVERSITY

# LANGUAGE POLICY

Edited February 2019

ISHU Language Policy extended for the MYP and the DP



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## ISHU Language Philosophy and Principles

### A. Philosophy

*To educate a child perfectly requires profounder thought, greater wisdom, than to govern a state.*  
*William Ellery Channing*

International School of Herzen University (ISHU) is an International Baccalaureate (IB) world school, which currently offers the Middle Years Program (MYP) and is a candidate school for the Diploma Program (DP). Language learning is central to all learning in our school, and we view language as a medium through which to discover and create meaning. At ISHU we aim to develop confident, creative and responsible learners and global citizens, and one way we seek to achieve this aim is by fostering a multilingual education, which is focused on inquiry-based learning. We consider multilingualism and the development of critical literacy as a means for cultivating international mindedness in our students and through our curriculum.

All teachers are language teachers at ISHU. All students are language learners regardless of what language(s) they speak. All students possess unique wealth of knowledge, which is crucial for defining their ongoing cognitive development and for maintaining their cultural identity. Our commitment at ISHU is to create a learning environment that actively supports language development within a bilingual curricular framework. As an international school situated in St. Petersburg, we are strongly committed to providing students with access to Russian language learning and utilizing the host country and community for language and cultural experiences throughout the curriculum. Equally important to the school is the belief that each student should have the opportunity to maintain and develop their mother tongue(s). The acquisition of additional languages allows students to further reflect upon and explore different cultural perspectives.

Furthermore, we believe that language is most effectively learned and practiced in a context where risk-taking is encouraged and error-making is considered inevitable and necessary. Language skills are acquired most effectively by using language in meaningful contexts, for constructive reasons, both social and academic, and through experiencing texts and literature from multiple cultural and linguistic sources. Classroom discourse happens in all subject areas and is one way



that the trans-disciplinary nature of language learning is facilitated at ISHU. Discussions, rehearsed dialogues and social conversation also play a role in language acquisition

This language policy is a living document, one that every teacher at the school shares responsibility for interpreting and implementing. The Language Policy is to be revised annually to optimize the educational process and incorporate any developments in IB and ISHU teaching practices.

The ISHU Language Policy shall apply to all participants of the educational process of the School, including its administration, teachers, students and their parents (legal representatives).

At ISHU we are committed to providing an enriching, equitable and inclusive learning environment to help maximize students' access to the IB curriculum being taught.

### **Language Policy and the IB Learner profile**

Language policy aims to contribute to the development of life-long learners, who possess all the attributes of the IB Learner Profile. Learning of multiple languages is the foundation of developing all IB Learner Profile attributes, among which being communicator and inquirer, open-minded and critical thinker are those impossible to develop without mastery of several languages.

### **Language Policy and International mindedness**

According to the IB mission and the mission of our school, the language policy aims to reflect the international mindedness of the programme. The ISHU provides opportunities to learn multiple languages, and well-established culture of language learning is a unique feature of our school. Language learning enables our students to obtain deep knowledge and understanding of multiple cultures, which, in turn, leads to developing tolerance and open-mindedness. It ensures that our students are prepared to consider multiple perspectives and tackle global problems. It also maintains the atmosphere of trust and mutual support in the multilingual ISHU community.

## **B. Principles**

ISHU teachers seek to:



- enable students to develop and use their linguistic skills in various contexts;
- enable students to learn diverse communication and behavioral models actively used in contemporary speech practices;
- encourage students to study language as a tool for understanding cross-cultural points of view and to learn and use language in an efficient, accurate and confident fashion;
- encourage students to learn from texts of different forms, genres, styles and applications, taking note of cultural potential of a literary text;
- assist students in understanding subject-specific lexis and terms used in different disciplines;
- encourage students to learn about mores and values of their own and other cultures and reflect on the socio-cultural development of mankind;
- develop openness to cross-cultural communication and tolerance to other cultures;
- enable students to develop a point of view, articulate their views, and substantiate their opinions;
- enable students to actively interact with people from different cultures, while maintaining their own linguistic and cultural identity;
- maintain transparency of courses, programmes and assessment criteria;
  
- develop interdisciplinary integration involving cooperation between teachers of all educational courses aiming to enhance retention of the learning material and facilitate its presentation.

Language learning occurs in every classroom and in every subject group. It stands at the center of the many interdependent cognitive, affective, and social factors that shape learning. Because of this reality, teachers in every subject group attend to the various language needs of their students. Following the principle of differentiation, students whose mother tongue is different from the language of instruction (English / Russian) may receive classroom support through one or more of the following examples where appropriate from this non-exclusive list, depending on the context:

- use of visuals;
- peer support for speaking mother tongue;
- access to readings in advance;
- access to graphic organizers;



- adapted tasks so as to make tasks less dependent on large amounts of writing when writing is not the objective;
- checks for understanding in ways that require students to respond with more than a yes, or smile and nod because we know that many cultures view this as being polite and respectful despite the respondent's actual lack of understanding;
- additional time to complete a task;
- where the assessment is not specific to the language, students may use language aids like dictionaries or translators;
- descriptive body language alongside verbal explanations;
- tasks designed to empower peers in offering one another feedback;
- tasks designed to discourage the reliance on a digital translation software or program;
- activation of "students' prior understanding, using the mother tongue and other languages when appropriate";
- consideration of "time and strategies necessary for activating and building up background knowledge when planning a unit of work or lesson";
- demonstrations of the learning objective or task;
- learning structures designed to enable students to work in small, collaborative groups.

Most of the differentiation strategies listed above will also benefit many other learners – even those whose mother tongue is the same as the language of instruction (English / Russian). This dynamic is especially true when learners of all backgrounds approach discipline-specific terminology. Furthermore, communication is a criterion in each subject group of the MYP / DP, and students will necessarily benefit from developing a wide range of communication skills.

### **C. ISHU Language Profile**

Hosting students from a wide range of countries with diverse language profiles, ISHU is a richly multilingual environment. The Language Policy aims to support this multilingualism, while providing clear guidelines for its operation.

The School's languages of instruction are Russian (the native language of the majority of students) and English. Approximately 90% of our students have Russian as their mother tongue. International students come from different countries (Japan, Korea, China, Latvia, Lithuania, Czech Republic, USA, Ireland, etc.), and therefore speak



a range of mother tongues. The most commonly spoken are Korean and English. The composition of international students is variable, as their families often stay in Russia for 1 to 3 years. In the academic year of 2018/2019, ISHU has 170 students (aged from 5 to 17 years), of whom 19 are international students.

At ISHU, all students in Grades 5-11, local and international, must study English and Russian (with at least one of them as Language A). The IB MYP (Grades 5-9) is taught in both Russian and English, with the exception of other Languages B (French, Spanish, German). The IB DP (Grades 10-11) is taught in English only, with the exception of Russian Language A and Languages B (Russian, French, Spanish, German). All DP students, regardless of their native language, will therefore have English as their main language of instruction.

## D. Language Use at School

ISHU teachers and administrators are Russian language speakers, and ISHU official documentation is mainly written in Russian. Both Russian and English are used for

IB documentation and for communication between IB teachers.

**Within the MYP**, English and Russian are used for communication in classes (except Language B classes), morning assemblies, and faculty meetings. **Within the DP**, English is used for communication in classes (with the exception of Russian Language A, and Languages B), morning assemblies, and faculty meetings. In both programmes, students are free to use the language of their choice in communicating with peers and faculty outside of class. This is usually Russian, English, or less frequently, another (possibly native) language spoken by multiple students.

## ISHU Languages and Language Pathways

### I. Entrance to ISHU

#### A. Entrance to the IB MYP

According to the Admissions Policy, a candidate who applies to the IB MYP in ISHU (Grades 5-9) takes an entrance interview including an oral part (English and Russian) and a range of written tests, depending on the age, grade he / she applies to and the educational background. Basing on the entrance interview outcomes, the Entrance Committee creates a candidate's ISHU Language Passport, which documents



a candidate’s linguistic background, including his / her mother tongue, best language, languages of instructions he / she has been exposed to, etc. This document and the candidate’s family plans and expectations are the foundation for the candidate / student’s Individual Educational Path, which includes language(s) of instruction, Language A and Language(s) Acquisition programmes choice and required language support.

The school offers the students one of the three individual language routes:

<b>Russian as a mother tongue</b>	<b>English as a mother tongue</b>	<b>Other language as a mother tongue</b>
1. <b>Russian</b> Language and Literature	1. <b>English</b> Language and Literature	1. <b>Mother Tongue</b> Language and Literature (school teacher or home tuition in accordance with the parents’ agreement)
2. <b>English</b> Language Acquisition / Language and Literature (based on the language level)	2. <b>Russian</b> Language Acquisition / Language and Literature (based on the language level)	2. <b>English</b> Language Acquisition / Language and Literature (based on the language level)
3. Second foreign language out of the three foreign languages offered by the school: German, French or Spanish	3. Second foreign language out of the three foreign languages offered by the school: German, French or Spanish	3. <b>Russian</b> Language Acquisition / Language and Literature (based on the language level)
		4. Optional One of the three foreign languages offered by the school: German, French or Spanish

## B. Entrance to the IB DP

According to the Admissions Policy, a candidate who applies to the IB DP in ISHU (Grades 10-11) takes an entrance interview including an oral part (English), a motivation letter and a range of written tests, depending on the DP subjects he / she applies to. All candidates, including those who have been studying in the IB MYP, are subject to the entrance interview. If a DP candidate comes from a different school



(regardless of the educational system), the Entrance Committee creates a candidate's ISHU Language Passport, which documents a candidate's linguistic background, including his / her mother tongue, best language, languages of instructions he / she has been exposed to, etc.

Basing on the entrance interview outcomes and the DP candidate's parents' interview, the decision is made upon enrollment of the DP candidate on the full Diploma programme and the selection of HL and SL subjects. Students whose level of English language proficiency is insufficient to successfully meet the full DP requirements, are recommended to enter the full Russian Federation Final Years programme to prepare for the Russian State exams. They may find it beneficial to take IB DP courses in addition to their compulsory RF courses, rather than the full IB Diploma programme. However, these students will have Russian as their primary language of instruction.

## II. Programmes of Study

### A. Language and Literature / Language A

Language and Literature / Language A is a compulsory subject for all students in the IB Programme. This covers learning Russian (the first language for the majority of students) and / or English (the other language of instruction in the Programme).

#### Russian

Russian-speaking students study Russian Language and Literature throughout their time at ISHU, as part of Language and Literature subject group of the IB MYP and Language A subject group in the IB DP (if they enter the IB DP); otherwise, they study Language and Literature as part of the 10-11 Years of the RF programme.

The Russian Language and Literature / Language A subject is designed for the following categories of students:

- students with Russian as a mother tongue;
- bilingual students who use Russian as one of the languages for everyday communication;
- international, non-native Russian students with B2 (MYP) / C1 (DP) and higher level of Russian.



As a licensed and accredited RF educational institution, ISHU provides support in preparation for the Russian state examination to students with any level of proficiency in Russian as the first language.

The number of hours and the learning content for Russian Language and Literature / Language A are determined by Head of the Russian Language and Literature department and IB Coordinator in accordance with the IB requirements for Language and Literature / Group 1 subjects and depending on whether Russian is the first language for a student or, if not, on their level of Russian proficiency.

## English

The subject English Language and Literature is designed for the following categories of students:

### Within the IB MYP:

- students with English as a mother tongue;
- bilingual students who use English as one of the languages  for everyday communication;
- non-native English students with B2 and higher level of English, choosing the subject English Language and Literature with the possibility to transfer to the Programme provided the following conditions are met simultaneously:
  - the student has at least B2 proficiency of English (CEFR) which is proved by the Certificate of the corresponding Cambridge English Language Assessment exam
  - the student is studying at least one more Foreign Language within subject group “Language Acquisition”
- students who do not have a sufficient level of English or Russian (languages of instruction in the programme Language and Literature in ISHU), if ISHU cannot deliver Language and Literature courses for this category of students within the IB MYP programme. According to the ISHU Inclusion policy, if the language of instruction is different from a student’s mother tongue, additional support is provided as described below.

Training and progress assessment are carried out according to the IB MYP Language and Literature Guide, thus preparing students for the IB MYP e-exam in MYP



Year 5 (Grade 9).

### **Within the IB DP:**

- students with English as a mother tongue;
- bilingual students who use English as one of the languages for everyday communication;
- non-native English students with C1 and higher level of English (CEFR), which is proved by the corresponding Cambridge English Language Assessment exam.

### **Other mother tongues**

The term “mother tongue” may refer both to the language that a student first learned when he/she was born, to a language he/she speaks at the level of a native speaker. For the purposes of the IB MYP and IB DP, the term “mother tongue” includes both definitions and refers to the language used by the student at home and/or outside the school.

If the student’s native language is not one of the ISHU’s languages of instruction, the school acts as follows:

### **Within the IB MYP:**

- the MYP Coordinator and the Language Acquisition subject group leader contact the student’s family to collect information about the student’s history of studying their mother tongue.
- the school administration employs a student’s native language teacher (e.g., a Lithuanian language teacher, a Polish language teacher, a Czech language teacher, etc. have been found by the ISHU at different times) and the IB Coordinator and the language teacher creates the MYP unit planners for the native Language and Literature for this student <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>
- if, for any reason, it is impossible to hire a student’s native language teacher, the ISHU discusses it with the student’s family and the native language is supported within the family (e.g., by regular classes with a parent). <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub> This will help students to develop native language skills, enhance their cognitive skills, and maintain understanding of their native culture.

### **Within the IB DP:**

- If the school is unable to employ a teacher of the student’s mother tongue, a student may be allowed to study his / her mother tongue as a “school-supported self-taught Language A: literature student”. This course of study is available only



at SL and will be assessed in accordance with IB DP guidelines for “school-supported self-taught” students.

In both the MYP and DP, the school offers **additional support** to students studying in a language other than their mother tongue - with the principle aim of facilitating teaching and learning as well as inclusiveness:

- Language and Literature and Language Acquisition teachers support all students in numerous ways i.e. implementing reading and writing strategies across the curriculum, selecting and providing access to literature from a variety of cultural backgrounds from all over the world, providing multiple opportunities at all levels of instruction for students to write in a variety of genres, allowing students ample choice in their reading materials and encouraging reading for enjoyment, assessing students formally and informally in the classroom.
- Teachers of all subject groups provide ongoing support and also handle language matters in their classes. This is based in part on the operating assumption that language use varies from discipline to discipline.
- All teachers work with the librarian to collaborate on vocabulary and concepts across the curriculum, spread use of a common language about language, teach the conventions of referencing, citing and the principles of academic honesty
- Differentiation in lessons is based on best practice according to the standards and practices of the IB. All teachers respond to students’ needs and may therefore provide individualized instruction guided in some cases by specific learning goals and students’ Individual Learning Routes. Teaching strategies may include working in small groups, using different resources with different levels of language complexity, as well as changing the level of questioning and tasks for individual students. Students may also have choices so they can follow their own interests or use a preferred learning style.
- Students whose fluency in Russian and/or English needs further support may access resources such as peer-tutoring, language dictionaries, and access to online translators and articles in a variety of languages.

### **IB DP - Bilingual Diplomas**

Students at IB DP level who receive a grade 3 or higher in two Language A courses (for instance, Russian and English) are eligible for a bilingual diploma. This also applies to students who attain a grade 3 or higher in one Language A course, and one Sciences or Individuals and Societies course in a different language (for instance,



Russian Language A, and Chemistry in English).

## B. Language Acquisition / Language B

### English Language Acquisition

Training groups are set up according to students' age and English proficiency level; in other words, there are students of the same age and phase within one Language Acquisition group (these groups do not have to be the same as classes within the year level).

A programme is developed for each group according to the students' individual characteristics, as well as MYP objectives for an appropriate phase of the Language Acquisition subject group.

Transition to the next phase of the Language Acquisition subject group is based on at least one of the following:

- students' performance in summative assessments within MYP units of the current phase, school mock exams, etc. [SEP]
- external monitoring results (annual Olympiads and state diagnostic tests) [SEP]
- official Cambridge English Language Assessment results (May / June session) [SEP]

The Language Acquisition subject group makes a collaborative decision on the next academic year plan for a group / student (transition to the next phase / staying in the same phase); the decision is made in August / September.

### Russian Language Acquisition

**Within the IB MYP**, Russian Language B is studied by international students (with the exception of bilingual students who use Russian for everyday communication). This course aims to develop students' communicative competence based on linguistic and speech competences, i.e. the ability to solve vital extra-linguistic problems using a foreign language. [SEP] A decision on whether students need to study Russian Language B and on the number of hours allocated to the course per week is made depending on their age and proficiency (phase) in Russian as well as the IB MYP requirements for Language Acquisition subject group. [SEP] According to the Admissions Policy, international students are placed in a group according to their age and phase in the Russian language. The test used in the admission process is based on the Russian Federation requirements to proficiency in Russian as Foreign Language.

RF recognized proficiency level in RFL	CEFR level	MYP phase taught in the school
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Elementary (additional)	A1	Phase 1
Basic	A2	Phase 2
First	B1	Phase 3
Second	B2	Russian Language and Literature
Third	C1	Russian Language and Literature

Table 1. Proficiency levels in Russian as Foreign Language

The school provides courses in Russian Language B across three phases (see the table). At the end of the MYP course of a phase, students do school tests to justify they are ready for transition to the next phase; they are also recommended to take the RF Russian as Foreign language exam to justify their proficiency in Russian officially.

Twice a year, students of Russian Language Acquisition complete a test based on which the Russian Language and Literature Department and IB MYP Coordinator decide whether the students can be moved to groups of Russian Language and Literature and subsequently take an exam in BSE format in MYP Year 5 (Grade 9).

Upon reaching CEFR level B1, international students may, depending on their future educational goals, transition to a full Russian-language programme of study, and be allowed to take Russian state exams. The school will provide such students with extra hours of Russian language support as necessary.

**Within the IB DP**, the school provides a Language B course (SL) in Russian. This course is intended for non-native speakers of Russian and operates in the same way as other Language B courses described below.

**German / French / Spanish Language Acquisition / Language B**

**In the IB MYP**, all ISHU students must study a third language throughout the programme.

The School offers programmes in French, Spanish and German. Students are streamed into groups of different proficiency levels (MYP Language Acquisition phases) based on an entry test according to the ISHU Admission Policy.

Training groups are set up according to students' age and their language proficiency level; in other words, there are students of the same age and phase within one Language Acquisition group (these groups do not have to be the same as classes within the year level).

A programme is developed for each group according to the students' individual characteristics, as well as MYP objectives for Language Acquisition subject group.

For the mainstream students, the programme of one phase in Language



Acquisition is developed for two MYP years (see Table 2).

Grade / MYP Year	CEFR level	MYP phase taught in the school
5/1	A 1.1	Phase 1
6/2	A1.2	Phase 1
7/3	A2.1	Phase 2
8/4	A2.2	Phase 2
9/5	B1.1	Phase 3

Table 2. Mainstream levels of language proficiency (Language Acquisition, 3<sup>rd</sup> language)

Students are transferred to the next phase after they have justified their level of proficiency in school exams. Students are also recommended to take international exams: DELE in Spanish, DELF in French and Goethe Institut in German.

The Language Acquisition subject group makes a collaborative decision on the next academic year's plan for a group / student (transition to the next phase / staying in the same phase); the decision is made in May / June.

**Within the IB DP**, students will choose to study English, Russian or Spanish as Language B, depending on their educational priorities and linguistic background. They may enter the SL Language B course if they have achieved at least B1 (CEFR) level of competence; they may enter either the SL or HL Language B course if they have achieved B2 level. In Russian Language B, only SL courses are currently available.

### C. ISHU IB MYP Linguistic Class programme

The Linguistic Class programme is developed for English language learners who plan to master the English language for academic purposes. The Linguistic Class programme includes teaching and learning certain subjects, included in the IB MYP curriculum, in English as language of instruction. ISHU aims at providing a minimum set of English-taught subjects that enables every MYP student to select at least one subject in each Subject group that contributes to the full IB MYP certificate. The decision on subjects taught in English is made during the June collaborative session and may vary

depending on availability of teachers, students' needs and capabilities, family requests etc.

By MYP Year 5 (Grade 9), Linguistic Class programme students should be able to complete their Personal Project in English as well as take their MYP eAssessment (electronic on-screen examinations), which are necessary for obtaining the MYP Certificate.

To be able to enter MYP Year 1 (Grade 5) of the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (linguistic class), students must have international examination certificate in English (A2 level) according to Common European Framework of Reference scale (CEFR) - the Key for Schools exam (Cambridge English Language Assessment) or Flyers (Young Learners Exams). Upon completion of the International Baccalaureate Programme (Grade 9), students will have achieved at least B2 level according to CEFR scale and should pass the First for Schools level (Cambridge English Language Assessment) or higher, which will enable them to enter the IB DP. The chart of expected levels of English Language proficiency for the Linguistic Class programme and corresponding Cambridge English Language Assessment exams is provided in the table below.

Grade	Language proficiency level
5	A2+ / B1 (preparation for PET)
6	B1 / B1+ (PET / pre-FCE)
7	B1+ / B2 (preparation for FCE)
8	B2 (FCE)
9	B2+ or English language and literature (based on teacher's recommendation and the student's targets)

Table 3. The necessary level of English language proficiency for studying in the bilingual programme.

## Information Support in Learning Languages

Information competence is a necessary component for learning languages. ISHU students develop their information competence when studying all Subject groups by searching, processing and critically evaluating information sources necessary for research.

The Information Resource Centre based in the ISHU Library provides support to teachers and students in their preparation for classes and self- directed work on



projects. The ISHU librarians regularly update students on new educational, fiction and non-fiction books and current cultural events as well as teach them the foundation of research and proper source citing according to the ISHU Academic Honesty Policy.

## Links between ISHU Language Policy for IB MYP and IB DP and other ISHU policies

### **Admissions Policy**

Enrollment on the IB MYP / DP in ISHU are made basing on the entrance interview. An integral component of the entrance interview is a candidate's language proficiency check that allows to develop an Individual Educational Path considering the candidate's language and educational background. For further details, refer to the ISHU Admissions Policy.

### **Academic Honesty / Integrity Policy**

Both students and teachers must be aware of the concepts of academic honesty and of the possible consequences of breaches. For further clarification of requirements, including the situation of misconduct, the Academic Honesty policy should be addressed.

### **Assessment Policy**

In all IB subjects, including Language and Literature / Language A and Language Acquisition / Language B, assessment is conducted according to the IB requirements outlined in the subject guides and procedures stated in the IB documentation and further clarified in the ISHU Assessment Policy.

### **SEN / Inclusion Policy**

The IB and ISHU's priority is to give students from different cultural backgrounds and students with special educational needs appropriate support in their language proficiency and enable them to use language both in everyday and academic



situations. For further details of SEN students support system refer to the ISHU Inclusion Policy.

## References and Resources

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## International School of Herzen University

Phone: (812)315-7442; 275-6716

Fax: (812)275-5610

E-mail: [school@interschool.ru](mailto:school@interschool.ru)

[www.interschool.ru](http://www.interschool.ru)