



December 2024

# Language Policy

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## Philosophy

In all departments (i.e. the STX, the HF and the IB-DP) of the school students learn at least 1 (in some cases 3) foreign language(s) besides Danish which is the official language of the school. The language program at Esbjerg Gymnasium & HF reflects the belief that language skills are a vital tool for social interaction and personal growth. They help to facilitate self-expression, international understanding, and sensitivity to cultural diversity.

At Esbjerg Gymnasium we believe that:

- Teaching and learning must address the diversity of student language needs, including those of students learning in a language(s) other than their mother tongue;
- Language acquisition is central to all learning;
- Every teacher is a language teacher; all are responsible for language development;
- Language skills must be developed in context through integration of language learning with subject area learning;
- Language is a vital tool for social interaction and self-expression; and should never be used as a means of exclusion;
- Learning more than one language enriches personal growth and facilitates international understanding and international mindedness;
- Oral language is the foundation of effective communication.



We believe students learn best when they:

- Have ample opportunities to speak, read, write, listen, view, and think critically;
- Make connections between subject matter and personal life experience;
- Engage in inquiry-based, authentic language learning;
- Engage in an active, collaborative, and respectful environment;
- Read authentic literature from many genres;
- Learn to use the writing process for different writing tasks;
- Build language skills in context through applicable, and relevant lessons;
- Present ideas effectively in written, oral, and visual formats;
- Analyse and respond critically to communication models;
- Develop criteria for, and produce, quality work;
- Take responsibility for their learning through self-assessment and reflection;
- Are met with high and clearly stated expectations. (visible learning)

IB Learner Profile: COMMUNICATORS:

“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”

### **Expected language situation and practices with the IB- DP as an integrated part of programs offered at Esbjerg Gymnasium**

#### **Explication:**

#### **Language A**

At the IB-DP programme at Esbjerg Gymnasium we expect about 35% of the students to be native speakers of Danish, 35 % to be bilingual with Danish or English as one of the mother tongue languages, while the remaining 30 % will represent students with a language other than Danish or English as their first language, as well as students with an even more complex language profile. At the STX and HF (the national system) about 15% of the students are of other ethnic origin than Danish.

All teachers at the IB-DP programme speak Danish and English and some of them also speak other languages (German, Spanish, French and Italian and most understand the Scandinavian Languages Swedish and Norwegian).

Students in the Danish national system have studied English for approximately 9 years before they start upper secondary school. Currently a tendency towards further globalization is reflected in curriculum planning on a nationwide scale. Along these lines, English-classes are required from first grade, two years earlier than previously in all primary schools. Furthermore, an additional



foreign language, German or French, is obligatory from fifth grade; up until now, a second foreign language apart from English has been optional for the individual student.

For most of our students, using English as the working language is a new experience when they start Pre-IB. In Pre-IB the language of instruction is English with the teaching based on the National curriculum (of the 1<sup>st</sup> STX) and the students is well prepared to receive instruction in English when they begin the DP years.

Since all subjects are taught in English (except Danish A and Language B) it is very important for the native Danes to maintain and develop Danish, which most of them do as they choose Danish A for their group 1 subject often combined with English A.

At IB –DP at Esbjerg Gymnasium, only Danish and English are offered as Language A. We have a number of students who take a bilingual diploma with both Danish A and English A and others to study English or Danish as Language A, even if it is their second language, and Danish B or English B as their group 2 subject. We offer this option instead of letting them study their first language as Language A Self-taught if they have not received instruction in elementary or middle school in the mother tongue language, which has only been spoken at home.

In order to support mother tongue development, we encourage students with other first languages to take extra lessons in their mother tongue, which at least sometimes are offered by the local community. However, this might prove hard to fit into the school schedule. In cases where students have received instruction in their mother-tongue language in primary and middle school up to High school level we offer them doing language A SSST. (examples of this are Italian A, Romanian A, Dutch A, Thai A, Ukrainian A, Russian A.)

### **Language of instruction**

The classroom is an English speaking zone. English is used as the sole language in teaching situations, except when certain terms need to be explained in Danish or another language to an individual student, and except for lessons in Danish, German or Spanish where the language of instruction is the same as the language studied.

The students may use different languages optionally in school outside the classroom with due respect to other students present or desiring to participate in the communication.

In order to enrol, students are required to have previous knowledge of the language of instruction.

Applicants who must pass a test before being enrolled are tested in English (written and oral). The test shows the applicant's abilities in reading comprehension and the students knowledge of grammar and vocabulary on the upper – intermediate level. The aim of the test is to verify that the applicant will be able to cope with the demanding study of different subjects in English. (*For further information consult the Admission Policy*)

### **Languages offered**

All students study one modern language in Pre-IB (Spanish or German). Spanish is offered as Language B ab initio in the IB-DP Programme, together with Danish B, and English B.

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The school librarian will help students and staff with information searches and also with identifying, locating, evaluating, and effectively using the found information. Esbjerg Gymnasium is connected to the local community library and has direct access to books and databases that contain professional material, scholarly articles, newspapers and magazines in many languages, which will be accessible through the school's intranet.

Esbjerg Gymnasium reserves the right to determine which languages and categories will be provided. Major guiding principles in determining the inclusion or exclusion of languages will be the school's mission, its commitment to the IB-DP-Programme, the scope and size of the demand over time, and the financial viability of offering a program of sufficient quality and sustainability.

### **Students with accommodative needs**

The special needs teacher at Esbjerg Gymnasium makes screening tests on all new students, including those in Pre-IB, to identify students with difficulties in reading and writing, such as dyslexia. The Inclusion Team will make individual plans for such students to help and support them together with mentors and other teachers. The IB team of teachers have regular meetings with representatives of the Inclusion Team to follow up on students and discuss any further need for help.<sup>1</sup>

### **Professional Development**

As far as the professional development is concerned Language A and B teachers are expected to follow the latest trends in language teaching, especially online, and visit language teachers' forums, as well as actual version of "the Diploma Programme assessment procedures". Language teachers are expected to work collaboratively, share practices and regularly review the standards and expectations for each course. They are expected to meet on a regular basis within their subject groups.

Furthermore, the school encourages all teachers to continue in their personal language development and to attend language courses and in – school workshops on language themes.

### **Monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the language policy**

All teachers and other staff personnel with contact with students are expected to remind students of never excluding anyone by using a language that is not known to others in a group – be it in class or elsewhere on the school premises.

A good foundation for understanding the importance of open-mindedness is given to the students with the general linguistics course for the Pre-IB students where their eyes are opened to the

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<sup>1</sup> Esbjerg Gymnasium: Inclusion Policy, December 2024



linguistic variety represented in the IB-DP and the enormous source of linguistic knowledge present within the group.

### **Communication of the Language Policy**

The Language policy is easily accessible at the school website, which is open to the public <https://www.esbjerggymnasium.com>. Besides, future potential students and parents will be informed during “open house” arrangements and future students will have the option of participating in “Pre-IB or IB student for 3 days” arrangements before enrollment. Representatives from Esbjerg Gymnasium also inform and introduce the language policy to partner schools as preparation to collaborative projects. (for instance “Go Global”: a collaborative project with 9<sup>th</sup> graders from an Esbjerg Community school)

### **Revision of the policy**

The Language Policy will be reviewed ad hoc when required by major changes and periodically within the range of the next upcoming 5-year self-evaluation.

Revised December 2024