

LANGUAGE POLICY

Next Policy Review: November 2027

Our Mission

OTR International School provides quality education to pre-school, primary and lower secondary level pupils within an inspiring, challenging, multilingual and international environment by ensuring individual follow-up and the well-being of each student. Our students are encouraged to become active and lifelong learners who show empathy, compassion and respect and help to create a better world.

Our Vision

OTR International School seeks to create a community of lifelong learners who are confident, balanced, caring and inspired to thrive in their life and workplace. Our school accepts children from the age of three offering a multilingual education. Pupils develop their bilingualism every day with qualified teachers whose mother tongue corresponds to the language chosen. Our school puts more emphasis on students' personal development by encouraging them to be more creative and prepare them for life by making practical connections between their studies and the real world. We aim to further incorporate in our school's mission and vision and cultivate as many of the properties and values outlined in the IB learner profile.

Philosophy

OTR is an international school based in Luxembourg, a country with a very rich history of multiculturalism which is reflected in our school. We value and take into consideration the cultural background, skills, experiences and interests of every student.

At OTR International School:

- we view language as an essential tool for successful communication, understanding and interpersonal relationships;
 - we acknowledge that all teachers are language teachers, as language transcends curriculum areas, which enriches our school community and creates a truly multicultural environment. In this context all teachers are officially qualified to teach in their language of instruction.

Strategies used in our School to support teachers in their contribution for student's language development include, among others:

- the use of books in classes;
- reading aloud in class;
- the use of charts and posters in classes;
- students being engaged in daily conversations in different languages, both inside and outside classes in school;
- students being treated as young adults when engaging in conversations;
- the use of a fully equipped library with books in several different languages (English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Mandarin, and Japanese, among others).

Language acquisition is taught in a context in a meaningful way. This results in the most effective language teaching and learning. Teaching of additional languages is consistent with the diversity and multilingualism of the OTR school environment. All students of International Baccalaureate at OTR International School are encouraged to adopt the IB Learner Profile and to become lifelong learners.

Practices

Mother-tongue language and additional languages are maintained and developed, whilst promoting international mindedness, cultural awareness and respect for others. According to the IB MYP best practice, students explore language and learn how to analyze text, organize text, use language effectively and to produce text appropriately. Students in OTR School form part of a continuous teaching and learning process, with which they become able to use and interpret language effectively for a variety of purposes and in diverse contexts.

Language teaching and Learning

Language teaching and learning is considered to be a continuous process at OTR school. Language courses currently offered at our school are:

Language and literature

- English

Language acquisition

- French
- Spanish
- German
- Mandarin
- Japanese

These classes are taught in the target language by a native speaker of the respective language. The processes used to identify the language needs of each learner in OTR School include the following:

- feedback from teachers of the Primary cycle (for pupils already enrolled in OTR School and continuing from Primary to Secondary school);
- feedback from language teachers in the Secondary school;
- placement tests;

- other foreign languages spoken;
- the specific linguistic background of a student (for instance, what other languages are spoken at a student's home, foreign languages spoken by a student etc.).

For students enrolling in the MYP, OTR School requires that sit for language placement tests. These tests take place at the end of the school year before admission or at the earliest possible opportunity thereafter, and a minimum level of achievement is set for all students. Based on the results of this test and on the recommendation of language teachers, a student may be placed in one of the six phase levels of Language Acquisition courses, even though usually students are placed in one of the three stages, namely "beginners", "intermediate" or "advanced". In OTR school, the aim is for language classes to contain students of the same or adjacent language levels only. Students are distributed as homogeneously as possible during the formation of language classes in our school.

In addition, in OTR school, language teachers are in the process of creating a template outlining the linguistic profile of our students. When finished, the template will include not only the linguistically-related remarks of teachers for their students but also students' own comments and thoughts for their own linguistic competences, as a result of a self-reflection on this issue.

Moreover, during lessons, students are given the opportunity to develop their skills in oral communication (listening and speaking), written communication (reading and writing) and visual communication (viewing and presenting). A variety of source materials are used e.g. texts from different times, places, cultures, geographical regions, historical periods and perspectives.

Support for students who are not proficient in the language of instruction Additional after-school support language courses are offered for the benefit of students who are not proficient in the language of instruction. These support courses do not incur any financial surcharge for the students and their families, and they enhance at the same time the overall programme of language teaching in OTR School. Support classes are offered in English and French and they take place at least twice per week. Placement of students in different language groups for these courses is made following the recommendation of the language teachers of the school. Specifically, when a language teacher believes that a student cannot cope with the demands of the language course, he/she fills in a "request for support" document and hands it in to the Direction of the school. Following the request of the teacher, an individual learning plan is being created by the support teacher(s), it is discussed with the Direction and a request for authorization is being sent to the parents of the student. Once the completed and signed consent form has been received by the parents of the student, then all material are brought to the attention of the Senior Management/Direction of the Secondary school, and if approval is granted, the student is invited to attend the support classes. Parents receive a letter outlining all the requirements for attendance in support classes and a copy of this letter is also kept in the personal file of the student in school.

Use of language in OTR School

- *Official language of the IB Programme at OTR*

The official language of the IB Programme at OTR school, for communication with the IB Organization and for the preparation and submission of all required documents, will be English.

- *Languages of communication in school and outside the classroom*

The main languages of communication in the school are French and English. Having students from several different nationalities in school, other languages are also occasionally used by

students and staff in their everyday communication.

• *Language needs of the community*

We fully support students whose mother-tongue language is neither English nor French and encourage the strengthening of the mother-tongue language at home and at school, wherever possible. Towards this purpose, OTR International school offers structured extra-curricular language support lessons to specific students at least twice per week. Moreover, a variety of books in different languages is readily available to students and can be found in the school library. In this context, we support strong mother-tongue skills while acknowledging essential both for effective foreign language acquisition and for effective conveyance of respective ideas.

• *Language skills and school library*

In OTR, the school library plays an immensely important role in developing language skills for the students. Starting from the primary school, regular teaching hours in the school library are incorporated in the weekly timetable of all pupils, during which they come in contact with age appropriate works of literature in English and French. A wide variety of books and magazines are available in the library in a total of seven languages (English, French, Italian, Spanish, German, Mandarin, and Japanese). Moreover, students can have access to digital and media resources for specific lessons too, like Language and Literature and Language Acquisition classes. In this way, ATL skills are also enhanced, different subject areas are combined and diverse objectives are addressed based on the effective use of language in the school library.

Review and standardization process

OTR's official language philosophy and policies are discussed over full faculty meetings, as and when necessary. Teachers from the same subject also meet regularly and discuss, moderate and standardize achievement levels and grades of students.

There is plenty of support material for languages (books, activities, audio and visual support etc.) readily available to teachers and students so that the transition between different levels and/or even courses and grades can happen as smoothly as possible.

Students, parents and teachers are kept informed about the language policy of the school both in general meetings that take place several times over the school year (starting at the beginning of each school year in September) and in one-to-one appointments that may be scheduled and made at any time within the year.

Teachers and the pedagogical leadership team are always in close cooperation towards reviewing, updating, adjusting and even revising language practices within the school. When adjustments need to be made, key IB publications are taken seriously into consideration in the review process.

Parent Involvement

Parent Engagement in Language Development

OTR International School recognizes that parents play a central role in their children's language growth. To strengthen the home-school partnership, we commit to the following practices and resources:

Parental Input in Language Profiles

- Parents contribute to the student language profile template by sharing details on home language(s), cultural background, literacy practices at home, and aspirations for their child's language development.
- Annual language development meetings are offered where parents, students, and teachers collaboratively review progress and goals.

- Workshops and Information Sessions
- Regular workshops for parents on topics such as supporting bilingualism at home, strategies for maintaining the mother tongue, and helping with reading in the target language.
- Information evenings at the start of the year to explain IB language objectives and available school support.

Resources for Parents

- Guidance booklets (digital and print) on raising multilingual children, suggested reading lists in multiple languages, and strategies to foster oral/written development at home.
- Access to the school library for parents to borrow books in multiple languages for shared reading at home.

Community Participation

- Parents are invited to participate in language and culture days, reading aloud in their mother tongue, or contributing to storytelling sessions.
- Parent volunteers can support after-school clubs or cultural events that highlight the value of multilingualism.

Regular Communication

- Biannual feedback opportunities where parents can share observations about their child's language use outside of school.
- A section in progress reports specifically devoted to language development across subjects, shared and discussed with families.

Conclusion

This policy has been created after carefully considering all relevant documents and publications of the IB Organisation. The purpose of this document is to inform all stakeholders about the practices implemented with regards to the teaching and learning of language(s) at OTR International school.

Language is a core element and an integral part of the IB Programme at OTR International School. Language teaching and learning is an immensely important ongoing process that is constantly under review, with the purpose being for all of us at OTR school to be in a position to address at all times the language needs of the student, parent and teacher body of the school.

Review of the Policy

This document will be reviewed collaboratively with all MYP staff in 2027.

Resources

- IBO. *DP: From Principles into Practice*, Cardiff: IBO. 2015
- IBO. *Guidelines for developing a school language policy*, 2008. Print.
- IBO. *Guidelines for school self-reflection on its language policy*, 2012. Print.
- IBO. *Language and learning in IB programmes*, 2011. Print.
- IBO. *MYP: From Principles into Practice*, Cardiff: IBO. 2014 (updated August 2022)
- IBO. *Programme standards and practices*, 2020.
- IBO. *The IB Language and Learning cycle*. Web. 19 December 2019.
- <https://resources.ibo.org/ib/topic/Language-and-learning/videos/ib-language-and-learning-cycle?lang=en>