

European Azerbaijan School



Language Policy

Revised by the Director, Principals, Deputy Principals, IB coords, Teachers and approved by the Board of Trustees
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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.

IB Learner Profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

The IB learner profile represents 10 attributes valued by IB World Schools. We believe these attributes, and others like them, can help individuals and groups become responsible members of local, national and global communities.

Inquirers – We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

Knowledgeable – We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

Thinkers – We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyze and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

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.

Principled – We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

Open-Minded – We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

Caring – We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

Risk-Takers – We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

Balanced – We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives, intellectual, physical, and emotional, to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

Reflective – We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

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EAS Mission Statement

The European Azerbaijan School provides each student with a diverse and vibrant education in a compassionate and supportive environment which promotes respect, innovation, creativity, intercultural understanding and critical thinking. This enables students to become reflective and respectful international citizens who, as empowered lifelong learners, can flourish globally and contribute fully and meaningfully to their community and create a more peaceful and inclusive society.

PURPOSE OF THE LANGUAGE POLICY

The language policy outlines our school's linguistic and academic goals. The EAS Language policy is designed to help our students in their learning journey, and our teachers in their planning for teaching and learning. The document provides an overview and guiding principles for language learning that permeates the entire school curriculum. Our policy is a statement of agreement, to which the entire EAS community is expected to commit to achieving our mission.

BELIEFS AND AIMS

The European Azerbaijan School aims to foster in students the ability to think and express themselves with precision, clarity, confidence and imagination in a variety of languages.

This is also aligned to the EAS Global Citizenship definition:

Global Citizenship

EAS enables holistic learning to take place in and out of the classroom, promotes respect, creativity, intercultural understanding, also through language learning, to nurture global citizens, lifelong learners who will find innovative solutions for global and local communities.

We believe that students most effectively use language as a vehicle for inquiry, self-expression and communication in a range of authentic situations and for a variety of purposes beginning at an early age. We believe that proficiency in the mother tongue is essential for acquiring and developing other languages as well as maintaining cultural identity and emotional stability. Thus it is essential that the language skills of Azerbaijani speakers are highly developed and provided for in our programmes. English is also important for all students, as it is the medium of instruction for the majority of our lessons.

We feel that the rich language environment of EAS will enhance our students' personal growth and will help to facilitate international mindedness and their participation in a wider international community. Given our beliefs, it is necessary that all teachers at every level in the school see themselves not just as subject or grade level teachers but also as language teachers who assist students with building language skills and therefore academic abilities.

It is also necessary that we address the particular challenges of our students who are learning and communicating at school in multiple languages, by providing an integrated, well implemented English as an Additional Language (EAL) programme up to the IB Diploma Programme level, as well as support for students with deficits in their multi-language learning.

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We continually develop our learning resources so that they support the diverse language and cultural backgrounds and needs of our students. Finally, it is important that our admissions policy reflects the need for an increasing level of fluency in English for new students seeking entrance to our school.

THE LANGUAGE PROFILE OF EAS STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

The students at the European Azerbaijan School have diverse linguistic backgrounds, depending on the family's particular circumstances. This includes students who speak mainly Azerbaijani, English and other Mother Tongue languages. A large number of our students are able to communicate in multiple languages, and may do so with high proficiency. As we are an English medium school, our students demonstrate varying levels of proficiency in the English language. Our families may also communicate through different languages.

ENGLISH PROFICIENCY AND ADMISSIONS

English language learning is supported at all levels and in every subject taught in English, with an emphasis on English fluency. We aim to provide a high level of English proficiency to meet the requirements of the IB programmes, but also as an essential skill to be able to communicate ideas, emotions and feelings. Our admissions requirements help to guarantee that the language abilities of students admitted are sufficient and supported as they learn through the IB programmes to successfully access the curriculum. For requirements related to admissions at Primary and Secondary please refer to the EAS Admissions Policy.

‘Mother-Tongue’ definition

‘Mother Tongue’ encompasses other terms including: first language, home language, preferred language, native language, heritage language. This term also includes sign language. Individuals may consider themselves to have more than one ‘mother tongue’ language.

LANGUAGE PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

IB PYP

ELC- Grade 4

English

The main Language of instruction in PYP is English. In PYP, students are taught by Homeroom teachers and by International English Language specialists. All subjects are taught in English Language, except Language Classes which are Azerbaijani and World Languages. There are also EAL classes for lower achievers which students attend during World Language hours.

Furthermore, students in need of additional EAL support are helped with extra assistance within smaller groups where teachers focus on their specific language needs.

Azerbaijani

In PYP Students receive Azerbaijani language classes 5 hours per week in ELC and 4 hours per week in Primary.

In PYP, Grades 1-4 Students are also provided with additional Azerbaijani Language Support Classes if needed.

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Support classes are provided for international students twice a week to strengthen their language development. These classes focus on unit-related vocabulary and emphasize all four modes of language: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Particular attention is given to reading comprehension, writing, and presenting, which support students in both their academic and social language growth. Instruction is differentiated according to the students' phases of language acquisition, ensuring that learning tasks are meaningful and accessible. Assessment in support classes is based on differentiated rubrics that reflect individual progress and growth over time.

World Languages:

In PYP Students study up to two additional World Languages, or EAL Classes according to their choices. The amount of language hours may vary depending on the preference. The most preferable language is conducted 3 times per week, second choice - 2 times a week.

In Grade 4, a local placement test is administered to determine students' language proficiency levels and to support their transition into the Middle Years Programme. Based on the results, students are grouped according to their level to ensure that learning is differentiated effectively. Within classes, further differentiation is applied through varied tasks, resources, and expectations, ensuring that students at different phases of language learning can succeed. Assessment is also adapted, using phase-appropriate rubrics that reflect the developmental nature of language acquisition.

Italian

Chinese

Spanish

Russian

French

German

Language Provision in Secondary at EAS

Azerbaijani Ministry of Science and Education Requirements

In addition to the provision below, please note that any specific language requirements mandated by the Azerbaijani Ministry of Science and Education are provided for within our curriculum, and through additional support classes. Those families who elect to take the Attestat examinations, are provided with information and support. Attestat examinations happen in G9 and G11. Language examinations for language acquisition learners form part of the Attestat, in which all students take Azerbaijani and then an additional language, appropriate to proficiency and the courses they have studied.

In addition to language requirements, the school fulfills Azerbaijani History courses through the teaching medium of Azerbaijani. Those students who are not following the national requirements, follow an Alternative World History programme where they carry out projects and research based in the same time period but in their own geographical area. In this way, they are able to increase their own awareness and understanding of their 'home culture' and the interconnectedness of period studies.

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IB Middle Years Programme (MYP)

Grade 5 to 9

In MYP, Azerbaijani, English and Russian Language are divided into Language and Literature and Language Acquisition courses.

Ongoing assessments provide evidence and information which enable us to allocate students to the course which will most benefit their language development. Students are allocated to a course when they join EAS, following diagnostic assessments in English. At the end of each semester academic progress is reviewed to ensure that students will continue in the appropriate course. If changes need to be made, they are made for the new academic year. Review is, however continuous, and therefore in specific circumstances changes may be made part way through the academic year. These are based on teacher recommendation and evidence of academic progress. Furthermore, students who perform below passing grade (below 4) are moved from Eng LL to Eng LA.

Language and Literature

These courses are offered in English, Azerbaijani, and Russian and incorporate using the language in context and developing skills of textual analysis. Students are given the opportunity to develop a wide range of language skills through a variety of contexts.

Language Acquisition

These courses focus on the development of the four language skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening. Students are exposed to the language through a variety of contexts and encouraged to develop their vocabulary as well as their understanding of grammar. In addition, these courses value the cultural context of the language, including different regional accents and idioms, and thus students expand their intercultural understanding.

The Language Acquisition courses support students in learning languages through different phases, from phase 1 (emergent) to phase 6 (proficient). When possible students are taught according to grouped phases (e.g. 1-2, 3-4, 5-6), however at times differentiation is used to accommodate different phase learners within a classroom. Planning reflects the different phases being addressed.

To fulfill the requirements of the MYP, students should have at least one language course which is Language and Literature, and at least one which is Language Acquisition.

It is possible that a student may be studying both English and Azerbaijani through a Language and Literature course.

English and Azerbaijani, either as a Language and Literature course or as a Language Acquisition course, are studied by all students at EAS. This is important to us as an English medium school who respects our host country.

EAS offers a wide range of additional Language Acquisition courses including, but not limited to;

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Russian, German, Spanish, French, Italian and Chinese. These are offered according to student and parental request and choice, as well as availability. We offer students to participate in external language exams (except Russian): DELE - Spanish, HSK Chinese, PLIDA-Italian, OSD-German, DELF-French.

English as an Additional Language

English as an Additional Language (EAL) is provided to students who are identified as needing support in order to access the curriculum through English. To identify those students we use LA diagnostic tests and teachers' evaluations in in-class support for removals from EAL.

The EAL support is given in three main ways:

1. **In class support.** EAL teachers provide in-class assistance to the students who have been diagnosed with a level of English that would not allow them to access the subject content successfully. Subjects which frequently are supported are Science and Individuals and Societies. Additional subjects may receive targeted support for assessments. The EAL teachers collaborate with the subject teachers to identify the language needs and strategies to implement in class.
2. **EAL classes.** These classes are in replacement to one of the elective language acquisition courses. These classes focus on improving skills through grammar and vocabulary focus, which may be related to units in other subjects.
3. **After school EAL classes.** These classes focus on building the language skills that would enable the students to access the curriculum and communicate their ideas effectively in a written and spoken format and understand instructions and subject content, as English is the main language of instruction at EAS.

Pre course

Similarly to the MYP, students study both English and Azerbaijani, at either Language and Literature or Language Acquisition levels. In addition, students choose another language acquisition course.

IB Diploma Programme (DP)

All students are required to study English as part of their IB DP full diploma package.

Language A Language and Literature

Language A Language and Literature courses are intended for proficient speakers and can be taken at both Higher Level (HL) and Standard Level (SL). The content of these courses focuses on literary analysis, comparative studies, and exploring different text types through both written and oral language usage.

Language A courses are offered in English and Azerbaijani. Russian is offered subject to student and parental choice, university aspirations and ability.

Language A School Supported Self Study

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In the case of a student being proficient in a language not offered at EAS, they may take the Language A School Supported Self Study. This is only available at SL level and requires the support of an additional external tutor as well as an internal supervisor. Students are required to take responsibility for their own learning and therefore it is important that these courses are approved by the DP Coordinator/Secondary Principal. In the past students have studied Chinese, Hungarian, Turkish, Italian and Russian.

Language B

Language B courses are offered at both HL and SL level and are designed for students who have prior knowledge of the language. The course focuses on the development of the four language skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening. Students are exposed to the language through a variety of contexts and encouraged to develop their vocabulary as well as their understanding of grammar. In addition, these courses value the cultural context of the language, including different regional accents and idioms, and thus students expand their intercultural understanding.

English is always offered as a Language B course. Other Language B courses are offered subject to student and parental choice, university aspirations and ability. These have included Russian and German in the past.

Language B Ab Initio

These courses are designed for students who have little prior exposure to the language and are only available at SL. In the past students have taken Spanish Ab Initio. Notably, in previous instances, students have opted for languages such as Spanish, Russian, French, Chinese and German for their Ab Initio studies, showcasing the diverse range of languages available for exploration.

IB Career-related Programme (CP)

As part of the CP, students are required to study language through the Language Development (LD) course. This course requires them to study a non-mother tongue language, and may be focused on particular aspects of the use of that language. For example, Business focused non-mother tongue English students have undertaken an 'English for Business' course, which is designed to develop their proficiency in the use of English language in business.

It is possible that a DP language course may form part of the CP for our students, under the requirement that they study a number of DP subject courses in the CP.

EAS Diploma

It is possible that a DP language course may form part of the EAS Diploma for our students, providing a DP subject certificate. In addition, students are required to gain IELTS and SAT qualifications, which are supported through classes at EAS.

Supporting families with different mother tongues

Every effort is made to ensure that families are able to communicate in a language that they have proficiency in. The majority of our families are able to communicate through Azerbaijani, Russian and English, however we have a growing number of families who may need additional support with effective communication.

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Our Student Affairs Team take care to ensure that if students or families wish, they may communicate, particularly about sensitive issues, in the language of their choice. This enables us to show sensitivity and empathy towards those of different languages and cultures.

In written communication, we provide both English and Azerbaijani versions, for central communications (e.g. weekly news, canteen menus, events and trips, surveys, announcements). Reports about individual students are provided in English, with the exception of Azerbaijani Language and Literature and A courses, and Azerbaijani History courses.

In verbal communications we provide:

- Translators during parent meetings, including Parent Teacher Conferences, individual meetings, pathway and course selection meetings
- During Parent Information presentations, we provide either verbal translation or written translations of the main points on the slides

As we recognise that language and culture are inextricably tied we also provide a number of opportunities to celebrate the home cultures of our families. Examples include:

- During holidays/festivals parents have a chance to represent their culture in their mother tongue.
- World Music performances
- Mother Tongue celebrations
- Folk Day events
- International Day

Language Balance, Placement, and Support Addendum

Balance between English and Mother Tongue Support

EAS recognises the importance of fostering both English proficiency as the medium of instruction and maintaining each student's mother tongue as a core component of identity, culture, and cognitive growth.

- **English as the Language of Instruction:** English remains the primary language of academic learning and communication across all IB programmes. All students are expected to progressively develop fluency, accuracy, and confidence in academic English.
- **Mother Tongue Development:** Students are encouraged to continue developing their mother tongue through Azerbaijani Language and Literature, as well as participation in mother-tongue support clubs and cultural celebrations.
- **Balanced Approach:**
 - At least **70%** of instructional time is delivered in English.
 - A minimum of **30%** of total language provision (Azerbaijani and/or other languages) is dedicated to maintaining linguistic and cultural identity.

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- **Integration Model:** All language departments collaborate to design interdisciplinary units that promote thinking, comparative literature, and intercultural understanding.

Standardised Criteria for Placement and Movement between Language Courses

To ensure transparency and equity, the following placement and movement procedures apply to all language programmes (PYP–MYP–DP/CP):

Initial Placement

- Upon admission or programme transition, students complete diagnostic tests in English and Azerbaijani (listening, reading, writing, and speaking).
- Placement decisions (Language & Literature or Language Acquisition) are determined by:
 - Diagnostic assessment results
 - Previous school records
 - Teacher and EAL coordinator recommendations
 - Student’s academic language performance during the first four weeks

Movement between Courses

- **Promotion Criteria:** Consistent achievement of phase 5 or above and teacher recommendation.
- **Transition Review:** Conducted at the end of each semester by the English/Azerbaijani department, coordinated by the Programme Coordinator.
- **Temporary Placement:** Students may be placed in a bridging group or provided dual-support (EAL + regular English) during transition.
- **Downgrade Procedure:** If achievement remains below phase 4 for two consecutive semesters, a review meeting with parents and teachers is held to adjust course placement appropriately.
All placement and movement decisions are documented in the student’s academic record and communicated to parents in writing.

Translation and Communication Procedures

EAS ensures inclusive communication across its multilingual community by providing accessible translation and interpretation support for all major school communications.

Written Communication

- **Official School Documents** (policies, announcements, newsletters, surveys, and event information) are provided in **English and Azerbaijani**.
- Academic reports and progress updates remain in English, except for Azerbaijani subjects.

Verbal Communication

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- **Parent Meetings & Conferences:** Qualified translators or bilingual staff are available during the meetings.
- **School Events & Presentations:** Verbal translation or written slide summaries in Azerbaijani and English.
- **Sensitive Matters:** The Student Affairs Team provides interpretation for parents in their preferred language to ensure confidentiality and understanding.

Community Engagement

- Translation support is extended for student placement meetings, counselling sessions, and university guidance, ensuring that all families can make informed decisions.

Assessment and Support for Limited English Proficiency

EAS provides a structured and inclusive framework for assessing and supporting students with limited English proficiency (LEP):

Assessment Procedures

- **Initial Assessment:** Conducted within two weeks of enrolment to determine listening, speaking, reading, and writing proficiency using EAL diagnostic tools.
- **Progress Monitoring:**
 - Termly reassessment of language proficiency levels
 - EAL teachers collaborate with subject teachers to track academic language growth and content access
- **Portfolio Evidence:** Samples of written work, oral recordings, and teacher observations are compiled each term.

Support Strategies

- In-class support with co-teaching and differentiated tasks.
- Targeted EAL pull-out sessions focused on academic vocabulary, writing structures, and comprehension strategies.
- Intensive language support and after-school EAL tutoring for newly enrolled students or those significantly below expected proficiency.
- Integration Timeline: Students typically transition from full EAL support to partial or monitoring status within two academic years, depending on progress.

Assessment Adaptations for LEP Students

- Extended time and simplified task instructions.
- Use of bilingual dictionaries and visual prompts.
- Grading flexibility during the first year of transition, prioritising growth over accuracy.
- Regular feedback meetings with parents and coordinators to review progress and goals.